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THE CITY OF
THE DINNER-PAIL

JONATHAN THAYER LINCOLN

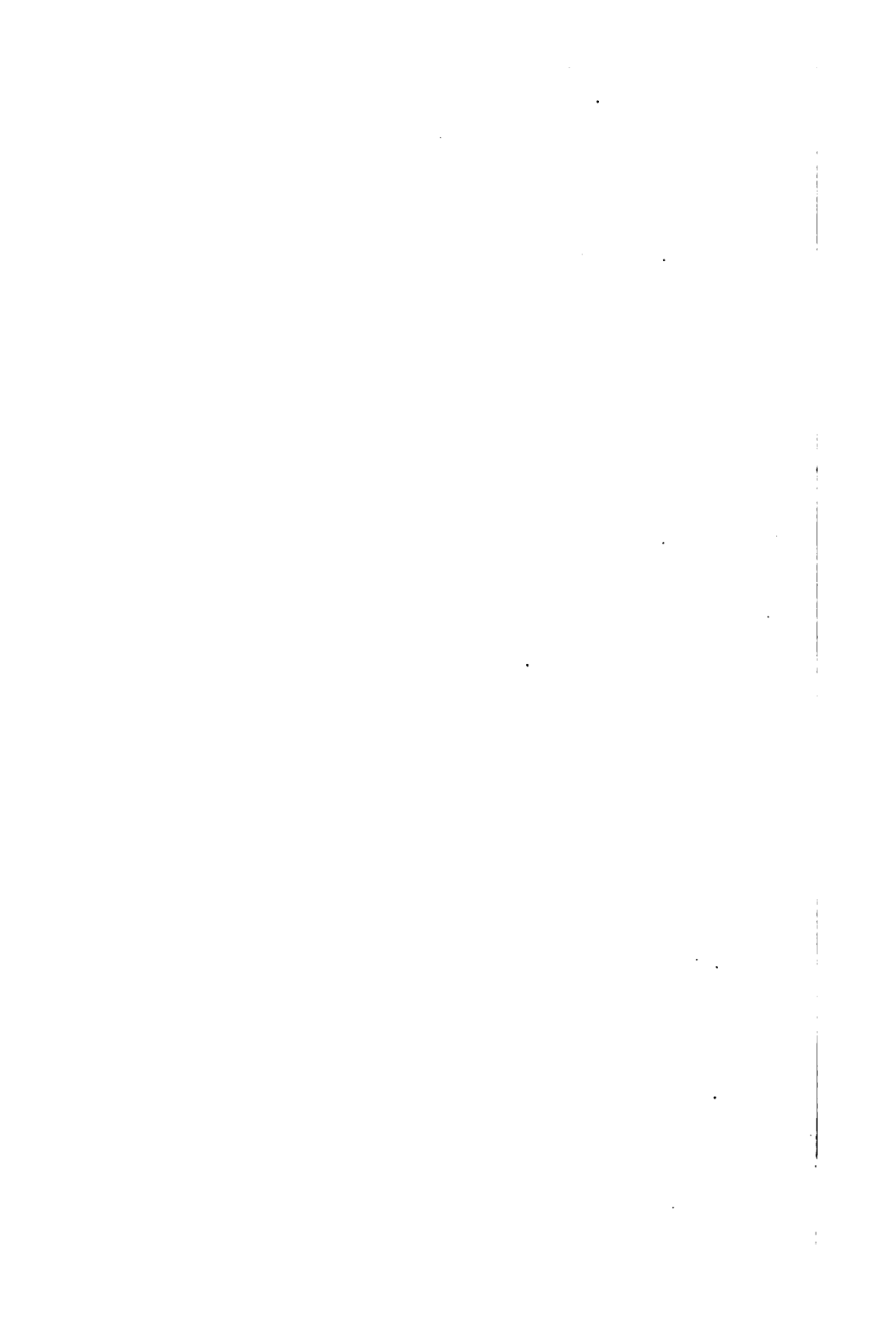
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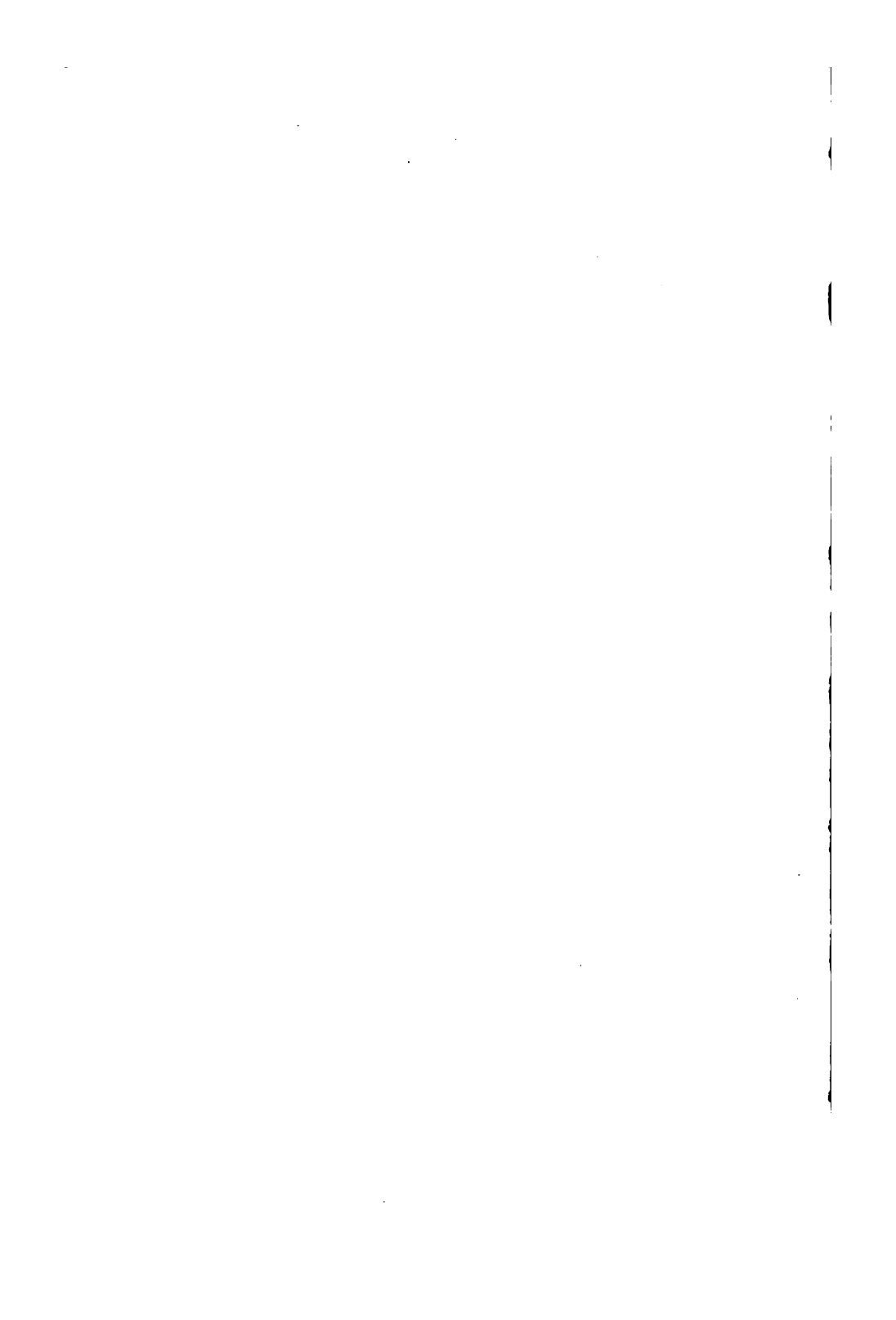


THE GIFT OF
EDWIN FRANCIS GAY
LL.D. 1918
OF CAMBRIDGE

November 1, 1919



**THE CITY OF THE
DINNER-PAIL**



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THE CITY OF THE DINNER-PAIL

BY

JONATHAN THAYER LINCOLN



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TO MY WIFE

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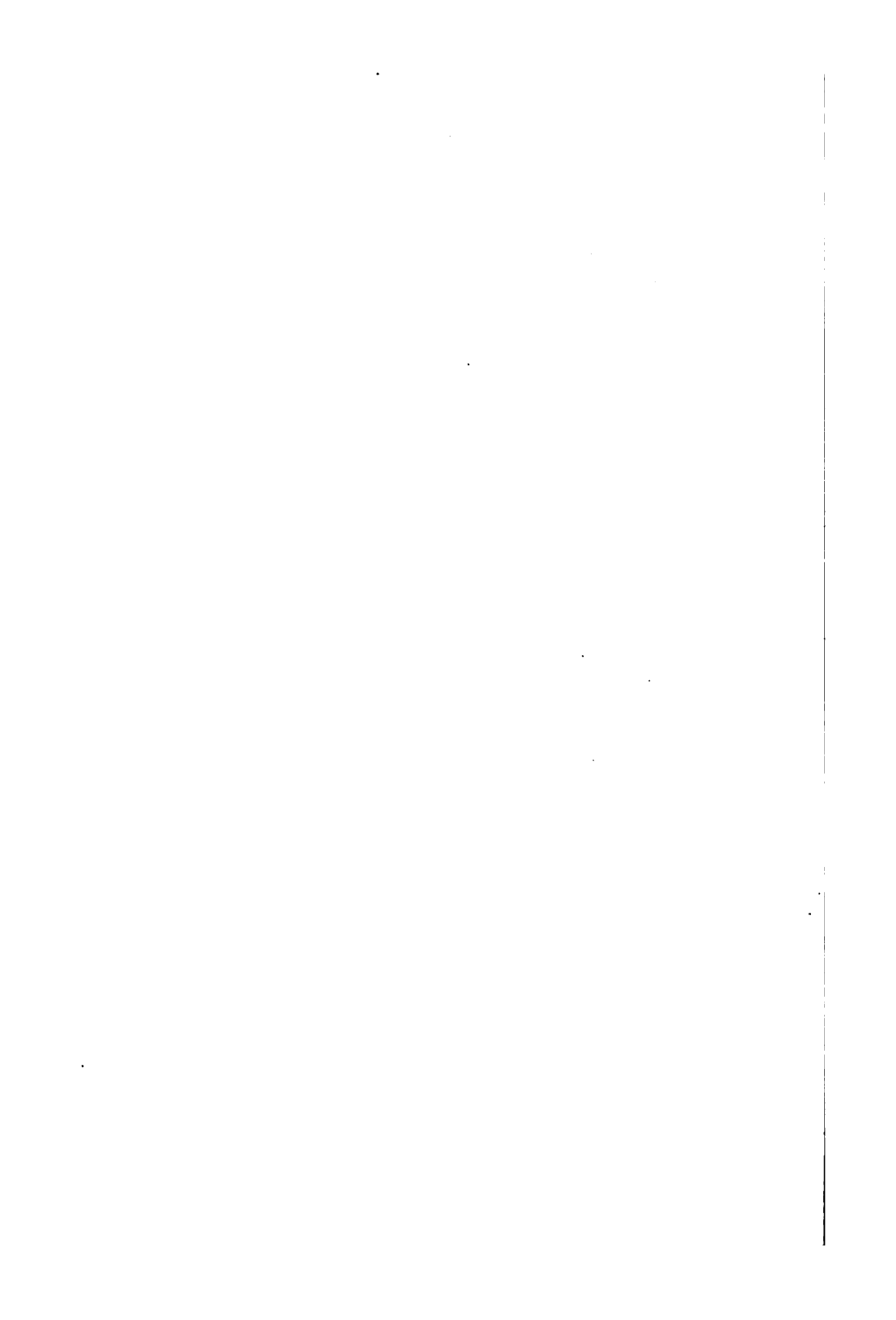
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* * * These chapters first appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Outlook*, and are here reprinted by permission of the publishers of those magazines.

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I

THE CITY OF THE DINNER-PAIL



THE CITY OF THE DINNER-PAIL

THERE are cities in America nearly if not quite as cosmopolitan in population as Fall River,—the City of the Dinner-Pail, I like to call it,—but none in which the people of many lands are so intimately associated in their daily lives; for the industry of this manufacturing community is not diversified, there is no opportunity for the people of different ancestry to follow this or that occupation—they must all make cotton cloth or perish; and so it is that the children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth live and toil side by side. There are nearly one hundred cotton factories in the City of the Dinner-Pail, operated by half as many corporations. Over three million spindles and nearly one hundred thousand looms whir and clatter within the granite walls of

the factories, and from daylight until dark nearly thirty thousand men and women earn their daily bread making cotton cloth.

Years ago thrifty New England folk built mills along the wooded banks of the river which furnished power for the machinery, and less successful New England folk operated the spinning-frames and looms. The factories were small, and the city then was nothing more than a little manufacturing town. As the cotton industry developed, the village grew; newer and larger factories were built; English and Irish workers came, then French Canadians, and finally Portuguese and Italians, Armenians and Russians, Polanders, Swedes, Norwegians, — the people of every race and language. The city now numbers one hundred and twenty thousand souls, and is the centre of one of the greatest industries in the country. There are those who shun the City of the Dinner-Pail as if it were the City of Dreadful Night; they gather their skirts about

them and pass it by, little knowing the vastness of its human interest, little dreaming of the poetry that lies beneath the smoke pouring from the factory chimneys.

Fortune has never been kinder to me than on the Sunday morning when I first went to service at St. John's Church, in the City of the Dinner-Pail. I was a very young man then, but one year out of college, and just commencing business. At the university I had formed many friendships, and had become, by some kindly chance, one of a little company of men, slightly older than myself, living in Boston—an interesting literary group; all clever men, and some of undoubted though untried genius. Since then one of the number has written some of the sweetest verses in our language; one has made his name familiar to every lover of Gothic architecture; one has written essays which to me at least are as sweet and fanciful as those of the gentle Elia; and one has painted pictures of rare beauty.

Some have failed, poor chaps, their genius turning out to be mere talent; and one whose mind was keenest and whose soul was sweetest died before his days of apprenticeship were done. We used to meet in an attic over a paint-shop in the heart of the busy city, and discuss with youthful enthusiasm the absorbing problems of the day. We were all idealists, despising Mr. Howells and the writers of his school, while our enthusiasm for George Meredith knew no bounds. We were devout followers of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, and worshiped the name of William Morris; we hated the rush and hurry of a commercial age, and railed at "progress" when understood to mean electric cars and telephones — in a word, we believed that mankind had been brutalized by machinery, and our mission was to preach the gospel of John Ruskin and save America from the hands of the Philistines.

Returning to the City of the Dinner-

Pail, I found myself in a different atmosphere. Rossetti's name was next to unknown; Morris may have been thought of as the inventor of a comfortable easy-chair, but not a single Kelmscott book was owned in the city. And as for George Meredith, if one of his novels strayed from its shelf in the Public Library, it was because some immature young person believed him to be the author of "Lucille." The City of the Dinner-Pail was then, as it is now, the busiest of New England manufacturing towns, a workaday city where no vice was so disgraceful as idleness; where thousands of men and women, yes, and children too, toiled from early morning until nightfall in the factories, earning their daily bread; where the manufacturers themselves worked early and late at their desks, and where the talk even of the home centred on business.

One day, as I was busy at my desk over a particularly elusive trial balance, a man older than myself by about four years en-

tered the office. He was an athletic young fellow, whose face indicated a cheerful, energetic disposition, and his dress marked him as an Episcopal clergyman. His errand was quickly explained. He had remembered me as a member of his college society. His parish was composed of English operatives, and, as the winter had been unusually severe, many of his parishioners were in need. One case particularly interested him, and he asked me to help him find employment for the man. There was a peculiar charm of manner, a mingling of sincerity and good humor, of common sense and enthusiasm, about the rector of St. John's which at once attracted me to him, and led me the next Sunday to accept his cordial invitation to attend service at his church. I found St. John's an unpretentious Gothic structure of native granite, situated a mile or more from the centre of the city. There were good lines enough in the building to suggest, in a crude way, some

little English parish church; and, upon entering it, the suggestion became complete. I felt myself for a moment in the "old country," and, listening to the responses, heard the dialect of Lancashire. The illusion was, however, only for the moment; with the voices speaking the dialect of a country beyond sea were mingled the nasal tones of New England; for in St. John's parish Yankee sons are begotten of English fathers. The Protestant Episcopal Church is the one heirloom left to us by England, when she officially departed from our shores, which time has altered least. To thousands in our generation it proclaims the message that the splendid history of England is our history too—that all her glorious traditions are ours by right of inheritance; and as I sat in St. John's Church that Sunday morning listening to the responses in which were mingled the dialects of Lancashire and New England, I was alive, as never before, to the grandeur of this heritage. And

what hearty responses these were! Listening, I understood that the people of St. John's worshiped God with whole hearts. It was hard to realize that these people, devout, single-hearted, enthusiastic in their quest for truth, were the same men and women who, working at the spinning-frame and loom, had so often seemed to be merely the vital part of the machinery. That moment I determined to know them better, and I here record with love and gratitude that many of the happiest hours of my life have been spent in their companionship. When I left St. John's that Sunday morning, I realized that the life about me was not the dismal, sordid thing that fancy had painted it, but, instead, possessed an interest passing the imagination; and with an unwonted enthusiasm I sought to find my own place in it.

At half-past five each morning in the City of the Dinner-Pail the factory bells ring out in merry chorus; only the older

factories keep up the custom, but they are so numerous that the bells are heard from one end of the city to the other. On many a dark winter morning the sound of the bells has awakened me to reflect for a moment on the lot of those who "get up by night and dress by yellow candle-light"; and I have returned to my dreams while already the streets were beginning to be thronged with the army of the dinner-pail. And what a motley army it is which, in the early morning, hurries through the streets to the day's work in the many factories! It is composed of men and women of every race and language—the greatest numbers, however, being of French, Irish, and English parentage.

The French Canadian population, numbering about thirty-five thousand, is centralized in the eastern part of the city. Walking the streets, one hears French spoken quite as often as English; boarding-houses bear the sign of "Maison de Pen-

sion," while other signs over the shop-doors set forth in French the dealer's wares. High on a hill overlooking the beautiful lakes which skirt the city to the eastward stands Notre Dame College, in which are enrolled over twelve hundred students, and near the college buildings towers the great church of Notre Dame. In the adjoining streets are the parochial residence, the convent, and the schools. Not far away is the office of "L'Indépendant," a daily paper of no mean circulation, printed in French. In its columns may be found recorded the meetings of such societies as the Ligue des Patriotes, the Garde Napoléon, the Société de St. Jean Baptiste, and such clubs as the Laurier and La Boucane, the Cercle Montcalm, and a score of others.

As one walks the streets of the French quarter it is hard to believe one's self in a New England city. If one were to enter the houses, this belief would be even more difficult; here he would find customs very

foreign to the soil in which they flourish; he would hear the affairs of the home discussed in a foreign tongue; he would find no trace of the Puritan traditions deep-rooted in another section of the city among the few thousand of New England descent who dwell there, but, instead, the traditions of a Latin race. While he would find so much that was foreign in suggestion, he would, however, discover, if he looked beneath the surface, a deep-rooted Americanism; for these people are loyal citizens of the United States. The French voters who go to the polls take a keen interest in politics; they influence new immigrants to become naturalized, and, when their papers are received, to exercise the right of suffrage. Here, as in their northern homes, the French Canadians run slight risk of extinction through race suicide, for their families are large. I have heard of instances where the children of the same parents numbered more than twenty, and families

of twelve and fourteen occasion no comment among them. Large families beget either shiftlessness or thrift, and in the present instance it is the latter which obtains, for thrift is the predominant characteristic in the homes of the French quarter. The French Canadian loves the dollar; he dreads nothing more than a strike, because a strike enforces idleness, and idleness entails loss of wages. There are no French Canadian labor leaders.

The Irishman who makes his home in the city is the same Irishman who makes his home everywhere in the land—as he himself might state it. There are twenty-five thousand Irish-Americans in the City of the Dinner-Pail; the ancestors of some came before the first factory was built; and many an Irish family can claim to be among the oldest in the community. From these families come many of the foremost citizens, conspicuous in every profession as well as in every trade and craft. Most of

the twenty-five thousand, however, came in recent years: some came yesterday, fresh from the old sod, as green as their emerald isle, clad in homespun, and speaking an unintelligible dialect; but before a decade has passed, all will have become enthusiastic citizens of the great Republic.

The English operatives, some of whom we have seen at their devotions in St. John's Church, bring with them the customs and traditions of the old country. They give tea-parties at which the guests sing unending ballads to monotonous music; Shrove Tuesday brings the inevitable pancake, Christmas its plum pudding and the Yule log. Perhaps at Christmas-time transplanted traditions are most in evidence, for at this season of the year the hearts of men go out to all mankind, and in the cosmopolitan community each speaks his message in his own tongue, and, as in the day of Pentecost, each hears the message of the others in his own language. The English trim

their churches with their own hands—it is no meaningless ceremony with them; they gather the greens and wreath the holly to welcome the coming of the Christ Child. On Christmas Eve the candles are lighted in many homes, and shine a welcome through the windows to the wayfarer; and, best of all, after the midnight service in the church, the waits go about the sleeping city—no whir of spindles or clatter of loom is then heard—singing carols. The voices of the singers ring out on the winter air:—

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
Peace on the earth, good will to men
From Heaven's all-gracious King.
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

And those who sing this carol are the same men and women who throughout the year

stand beside the spinning-frame and loom in the noisy factories.

A description even of the Christmas customs of the folk of the many nations who work side by side in the mills would fill many pages; and a volume which should include also a description of the Old World traditions which survive in the family life would be of vital interest to the student of sociology; for the City of the Dinner-Pail strikingly illustrates the wonderful process of assimilation which is going on throughout our country. Each year immigrants from every nation under heaven come to our shores, and are transformed into loyal citizens. It is, happily, not true that the traditions of the old home vanish in a moment as by a miracle; they remain, slightly modified perhaps, for generations; but they survive in the home, not in the civic life; and the survival of these customs lends a peculiar charm to the study of life among the toilers.

Some one has facetiously said that

“American” was spoken at the building of the tower of Babel. Underlying this saying is a truth which one can easily understand by walking, some Saturday evening, through the main street of the City of the Dinner-Pail. Years ago, when the great city was an insignificant factory town, and all the spindles in operation would not equip the smallest of its many mills to-day; when these spindles were tended by the sons and daughters of farmer-folk, whose grandchildren now look pityingly at the operatives returning from the day’s work, dinner-pail in hand; when the sight of any of the foreigners who crowd the streets to-day (the Italian woman, her head surmounted by a huge bundle tied up in a bright shawl; the pretty French girl, dressed stylishly, if cheaply; the Portuguese laborer smoking his cigarette; the long-bearded rabbi; the Dominican monk in the garb of his order) would have created a stir of excitement to be talked of for days in the community,—

years ago it was the custom of the village folk, after their Saturday supper of baked beans and cold corned beef, to go "down street," as the saying was. The shops were open, and thither went the village folk to make the week's purchases, pay the past week's bills, and, if the night were pleasant, leisurely to walk up and down the street. Besides this the village offered meagre pastime for its people. Nor was there great need for amusement, save on Saturday nights; for work began at sunrise and ended at sunset, and it was only on the evening before the Sabbath that the good people of the town were inclined to sit up o' nights.

When the mills multiplied and the foreigners came, they, too, took up the custom of going "down street," and this custom has survived until to-day. On other evenings Main Street presents no unusual appearance, but on Saturday night the sidewalks for a distance of half a mile north and south of City Hall — the limits of the village street

as it was in the old days—are crowded with good-natured, laughing men and women. Nowhere in the world, not even on Broadway or Piccadilly, could we find a crowd more dense. It is interesting to note that this unusually crowded condition is limited to a single mile of sidewalk in the very centre of the city; that the crowding begins at about seven in the evening and ceases at nine, as abruptly as it begins; that the greatest numbers promenade on one side of the street, which must have been the “proper side” in the old days; and that the vast throng congested within these narrow limits seems bent on no business. The shops are open and are well patronized, but the number of shoppers is insignificant compared with the thousands who walk aimlessly along, an irresistible current of humanity.

What multitudes of events in every land under heaven have contributed to gather here these men and women of so diverse

heritage! Here are united the strength and vigor of the North, the gentle, careless spirit of the South; here East meets West, and all are welded in a mighty whole. What meaning has their presence here to us who seek to understand the "Social Question," who seek to solve the "Labor Problem"?

The first fact—so evident that a specific statement of it seems unnecessary—is this: every man and woman making up this throng is a human being, an individual, distinct and different from every other individual that God has created. Evident as is the fact, there is a tendency in our time to neglect its meaning. Our very phraseology when we refer to these working men and women indicates the trend; we speak of the labor element, the labor vote, the demands of labor, when we mean the workers: the individuals who toil in the factories, the votes of these individual workers, and the demands for better conditions of life which these individuals, act-

ing with a common impulse, make upon their employers. In the old days "help" was the word used to designate the workers, and this difference in language has a deeper significance than at first appears. It means that men and women who in the early days of the factory system helped their employers—that is, were associated with them in the manufacture of cotton cloth—now sell their labor as they might sell coal and cotton were they dealers in these commodities, and that somehow, in the complicated development of the factory system, the individuality of these workers has been so merged with the great machine of which they are the parts, that in our common speech we fail to make the proper distinction between labor and the laborer, between the commodity and the man who sells the commodity.

If we were to follow these men and women to the thousand homes to which they will return, we should find these homes

far more attractive than the average citizen is prone to think. We should also come to know the workers as individuals, and in our minds separate the commodity from the man who sells the commodity; and, becoming acquainted with these persons in their homes, we should learn to use discrimination in accepting as truth much that is written about them in sensational magazine articles, much that is printed in the authoritative-looking volumes of the doctors of philosophy.

In the last generation the factory day began at dawn and ended at nightfall. Then, as now, some workers were contented and some rebellious; by turns the ten-hour and the eight-hour day were heralded as the dawn of the workingman's hope; but still some are satisfied and some discontented. In our vain efforts to solve the labor problem we rush from one ineffectual remedy to another, because we are unable to view the problem in its true perspective. If we

could follow the men and women who crowd the main street of the City of the Dinner-Pail each Saturday evening, if we could go to their homes, and become acquainted with the worker as an individual, many errors that now distort our vision would be corrected.

At half-past five each morning in the City of the Dinner-Pail the factory bells ring out in merry chorus, and half an hour later the streets are thronged with the army of the dinner-pail, hurrying to the day's work in the factories. Twenty-seven thousand men and women make up this host of labor—men and women, that is the fact to be remembered. Once in the factory, they will become the vital part of the great machine which annually turns out so many million yards of cotton cloth; but now, as they hurry to the day's work, we recognize in each an individual human soul, separate and distinct from every other. Fearful injustice has been done these men

and women by persons with the best intentions—persons who write books about them, slandering their manhood and their womanhood. This army lives on frugal rations, fights hard, sleeps well, every year advances, never retreats. The social unrest that so many talk about and fear is a healthy unrest—it is the sign of social progress.

Less than a century ago, when the factory bells rang out upon the morning air, what manner of men and women responded to the call? New England folk, men and women, boys and girls from the neighboring farms. To-day their children own these factories, and the Yankee operative has all but disappeared. The English followed, then the French, not to starve and fail, but to follow the law of human progress. In every generation of these factory-folk men and women appear in whom is embodied the aspiration of the class, the aspiration which underlies the social unrest. The immediate cause of that unrest

may be some condition incident to the factory system, but these immediate causes are not primal causes; the fundamental cause is inherent in that impulse of the race that compels it to rise from worse to better, from better to best.

The case of an elderly slasher-tender with whom I am acquainted is an instance of this impulse working in the individual. This man was a Lancashire operative of the class that supplanted the Yankee worker when, in the process of social evolution, the New Englander ceased to tend the machinery in the factories. He and his wife took equal chances with the other operatives in the mills, they worked under the same conditions, with equal opportunities, yet they were able to send their children to high school and normal school, and thus the latter became teachers instead of weavers; their grandchildren will go to college, and, alas! will forget the link that unites them with the toilers. The case of the

slasher-tender is not peculiar; there are many hundred such cases in the City of the Dinner-Pail. He is not some meteor-like exception of a man who rises from rail-splitter to President and is used by the preacher as an example with which to exhort listless boys; he is typical of a phase of the industrial question that the reformers have overlooked.

We see evidences of the working of the law of human progress in classes of toilers, here in the City of the Dinner-Pail, as well as in individuals. Matthew Arnold suggested culture as the antidote for anarchy. Mr. Frederic Harrison and the reformers laughed at him. "Do something," they cried; "do something; no good can come of dreaming; culture cannot put food into infants' mouths." Reformers then, as now, were in a hurry. But the poet was wiser than the reformers knew. Here, in the City of the Dinner-Pail, the English replaced the Yankee workers, and French

Canadians are replacing the English. The Yankees did not starve, and the English are not starving. The Yankees became manufacturers, they became clerks and merchants and doctors and lawyers and teachers; and the English are following in the footsteps of the Yankee. Every individual did not rise; thousands failed hopelessly, — that is the law, — individuals perished, but the type survived, and in surviving advanced. The English replaced the Yankee, and the French are replacing the English, and in the life of the French-Canadian operative I see an evidence of the law of progress working in a way that suggests Matthew Arnold's remedy.

I have already referred to the great church of Notre Dame, which, surrounded by the college building, the convent, and the schools, stands high on the hill overlooking the city. You may say that that minster, the spires of which may be seen for miles about, stands for the power of the Roman

Church, and so it does. But it stands for a power mightier still than the ecclesiastical dominion of the Bishop of Rome; it stands for the aspiration of the race; and, in a particular sense, it stands for the law of human progress at work among the French-Canadian operatives. Who built that great church high on the hill overlooking the city? It was built by French-Canadian operatives, — thousands of them, — each giving his mite from the meagre wages earned day in and day out, standing beside the spinning-frame and loom. Many hundred thousand dollars in wages is the measure of their sacrifice. The church is built in mighty proportions; the aspiration which built it is a mighty aspiration. But if you come to study the building with the eye of an architect, forgetting its real meaning, you will see recorded in its stones the fact that the aspiration, mighty though it be, is at the same time crude and uneducated. Had Ruskin seen that build-

ing, he would have had another argument to show the brutalizing effect of machinery. The church is neither classical, nor Gothic, nor Byzantine, nor Egyptian, but a very hodgepodge of every order of architecture in the history of that useful art. But who was the architect? From what class did he spring? From the same class to which belong the men and women who built the church by their sacrifice. And when the building in all its rawness, but in all its vast proportions too, was completed, these same operatives gave again, each his mite, and an Italian painter of great talent—some of us believe great genius—came to the City of the Dinner-Pail and gave four years of his life to decorating the walls of the church. He painted a series of pictures illustrating the human life of Christ, and in a mighty canvas depicted the Last Judgment in such a manner as to attract to Notre Dame students of art, who, as they study the picture, forget

the crude walls that frame it, forget the noisy city with its whirl of spindles and clatter of shuttles, finding here in such an unexpected corner of the world a work of art which raises their souls to the height of vision. In the great church of Notre Dame I see an evidence of the law of progress operating in a class of working people seeking its end through culture. That the people themselves are unconscious of the law and of the means by which it operates does not lessen the force of the law nor deny the means.

We turn from the individual and the class to the whole community, and here in no less striking manner we see evidences of the law of progress seeking its end through culture. Given a city of one hundred and twenty thousand persons, seven-eighths of them of the operative class, and you would little expect to find that in all those things that make for the higher life of the community this city should have kept pace, nay,

even have outstripped, its progress in material things. Yet such is the case. The first free public library in the world was established in Boston, and nine years later the City of the Dinner-Pail followed the example of the Modern Athens. We might look for the first free public library in a great intellectual centre, but we should hardly expect to find the second in a workaday community. The impulse that prompted the establishment of the library in Boston came, without doubt, from those who knew the blessings of the intellectual life and desired to dedicate a great public institution to the advancement of learning. The impulse which led to the establishment of a similar institution in the City of the Dinner-Pail found its source, I believe, in an aspiration that looked beyond the factory walls — the fruit of the law of human progress at work among the toilers.

More natural than the establishment of a public library, perhaps, was the introduc-

tion of free text-books in the public schools years before free text-books were required by state law. In a community of wage-earners, where even a small sum spent for books would be a burden to the individual, it was natural that the municipality should be called upon to bear the burden; yet at the same time the fact that the community anticipated the law is an evidence of its faith in the value of education, its effort to combat anarchy with culture. More natural still, but nevertheless an evidence of the aspiration of its citizens, is the fact that before the law of the state required manual training to be taught in the high schools of all cities of twenty-five thousand inhabitants and over, such a course was made a part of the school curriculum in the City of the Dinner-Pail, while the same community was among the first to establish a free kindergarten and a public training-school for teachers.

It may be said that all these evidences

of a community alive to the blessings of education were due, in the first place, to the sagacity of far-seeing individuals, public servants, themselves educated men and actuated by philanthropic zeal; and in a measure this is so; but that such individuals should be developed in this workaday city, in the very heart of Philistia, and daily touching elbows with the populace, is the best evidence of that aspiration to which I refer; and if this fact were not enough to prove the truth of the statement, then the enthusiasm with which the toilers take advantage of these many opportunities opened to them could be cited as conclusive evidence. Had there been no free normal school, the slasher-tender's daughters would not have become teachers; but it was not the training-school that enabled them to live their lives in the schoolroom instead of the factory, it was the law of progress dominating the mother's mind,—that mother who for so many years tended eight looms

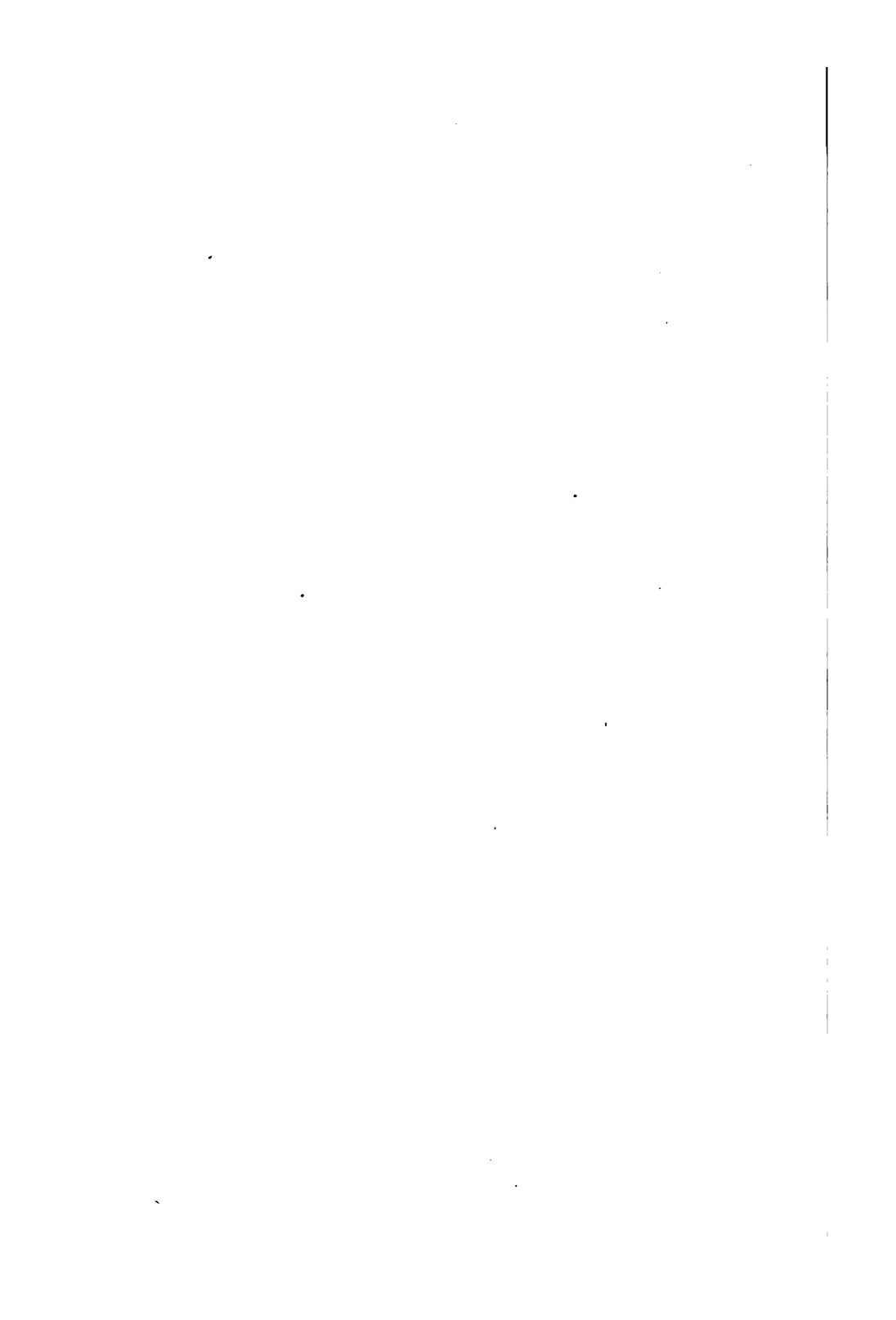
in the noisy weave-room, — the unconquerable desire in the mother's heart to give her children better things than she had known. And again, turning from the individual to the working people as a whole, we find the final evidence. It is no small thing for three thousand operatives, after spending ten and one-half hours at work in the factories, to attend school from seven o'clock until nine in the evening. Yet so they do, not only in the textile school, seeking to increase their efficiency as operatives; not only in the primary and intermediate schools, seeking to fulfill the educational requirements of the state law; but in the evening high school, seeking that culture which is the fulfillment of the law of progress.

In the introduction to his "History of English Literature" Taine says: "Neither mythology nor language exist in themselves; but only men who arrange words and imagery according to the necessities of their organs and the original bent of their intel-

lects. A dogma is nothing in itself. Look at the people who have made it; nothing exists except through some individual man; it is this individual with whom we must become acquainted." In just this way, there is no labor problem separate from the men and women who create it. To understand the problem we must know the individuals, and know them as they really are—the worker at the loom and in his home, the employer at his desk and in the world of men.

II

THE AVERAGE CITIZEN AND THE LABOR PROBLEM



THE AVERAGE CITIZEN AND THE LABOR PROBLEM

THE library shelves groan with the weight of books catalogued under the head of "Sociology." Thousands of these volumes deal with what is loosely called "The Social Question," or, what amounts to the same thing, "The Labor Problem." Some of the authors are scholars who have thought deeply along economic lines; some are sensational writers who cry that the rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer, and nothing but a revolution can restore the balance. There are also apologists for the present régime, who tell us that, all things considered, the worker has no reason to be discontented; yet the worker is discontented, and the fact must be explained. There is a trend toward

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Socialism in these days, and programmes for municipal ownership are in the air: some reformers would enact laws to forbid, or at least to limit, the inheritance of great fortunes; some would level the conditions of rich and poor by a system of graduated taxation. A thousand projects are being discussed, any one of which we may be called upon to sanction at the polls, yet the average citizen has but the haziest notion of the social question and the conditions which create it. The average citizen has not read the books upon the library shelves—and with reason, as it seems to him. The ponderous tomes of the doctors of philosophy present a forbidding aspect; he has been told that the volumes written by young ladies engaged in settlement work are not always trustworthy; and he shuns the writing of the reformers in the belief that all such are anarchistic. He has a notion that great fortunes must be tainted; he regrets that thousands of his fellow men go

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to bed hungry; and when strikes and lock-outs send up the market price of beef and coal, he believes there is a labor problem. Then he forms his opinion of it from either the yellow or the subsidized press. Poor, perplexed average citizen, if he would come to the City of the Dinner-Pail, walk its streets and enter its factories, he would find the problem stated and discover some practical suggestions toward a solution.

The writer of this essay is not an economist—he is not even a sociologist; he has, however, lived all his days in a manufacturing community; he has known and admired many persons of great wealth, and he has known and admired many persons who toil from daylight to dark, earning their daily bread in the factories; and he hopes that certain facts that he has learned from these persons may be of some benefit to the average citizen in his quest for truth.

Some years ago a reputable review published a sensational article concerning the

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City of the Dinner-Pail, and the Board of Trade selected a writer to reply to certain statements made in this article which did not seem to square with the truth. It was my good fortune to accompany the counsel for the defendant in his tour about the city investigating the charges. The sensational writer had described the tenements in which the operatives lived, and selected for particular criticism a group of houses owned by a prosperous corporation. Such a picture of squalor has seldom been painted—evidently the gentleman had never before seen a house without a bath on every floor. These houses were built about a quadrangle which served as a common back yard, and while this back yard might not be all that Mr. J. Horace McFarland might desire so far as grass and trees are concerned, it was a very large breathing-space, and gave each tenant a right to more out-of-doors than one can hire for several thousand dollars on Fifth Avenue. In the centre

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of the quadrangle were a number of outhouses which caused this diligent student of sociology a bad quarter of an hour, and he wrote a long paragraph about the fearful sanitary conditions of the court, where outhouses were placed close to the bedroom windows. He failed, however, to state the fact that, while the small wooden buildings were originally intended for sanitary purposes, they were used at the time he wrote as woodsheds, the tenements having been fitted with modern plumbing many years before. He summed up his case against the quadrangle in these words: "In the centre of all this filth stands a pump." Not only did the noxious odors invite diphtheria and Heaven knows what other fearsome diseases, but the tenants drank infected water from a well situated in the courtyard! As a fact, there was a pump in the yard, but the pump was without a handle, for the tenants drank the same water with which the city provided their landlord's table.

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This well illustrates the sensational writer's method in dealing with the problem. Every fact stated was true—there were outhouses in the quadrangle, and near by there was a pump; but while the facts were true, the writer's conclusions were false, because, while he told nothing but the truth, he failed to tell the whole truth.

My friend's reply was quiet in tone and more scholarly in treatment than the paper it contradicted; but he, like the other author, was a partisan—one held a brief for the workingman, the other argued his case for the manufacturer. The counsel for the defendant called attention to the large deposits standing to the credit of workingmen in the savings banks: a majority of the depositors in several institutions for savings were factory operatives, and this he cited as evidence that the operatives were well paid and thrifty. While I believe the workers in the City of the Dinner-Pail are thrifty and well paid, I want to suggest the danger

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of drawing such a general conclusion from the evidence. Large bank deposits standing in the names of factory operatives clearly indicate that a healthy financial condition exists among the workers, but do not prove that the average worker earns more than he spends. The fact that many operatives own bank-books merely shows that under existing conditions the thrifty worker may save money. To ascertain the exact meaning of the deposits argument it would be necessary to know the aggregate of the deposits and the number of depositors, and to classify the workers as to the amount of wages they actually earn; this in itself would require the attention of one student for a considerable time. It is as unfair to take the thrifty, self-denying workingman as the type as it is to set up the hungry, depraved wretch as the inevitable result of the factory system; for the workingman is, after all, merely a human being, an individual distinct and different from every other, and whether he

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lives in squalor or in comfort depends, in a larger measure than we are wont to think, upon himself; and his well-being on his obedience to greater laws than legislatures can enact.

At the railway station one morning I met an army of immigrants just arrived: one hundred and sixty Western Islanders, men, women, and children seeking a new home on this continent. Had I journeyed to the Azores, outside the principal ports I should have had difficulty in finding so great a crowd of natives; yet here, within a mile of my own hearthstone, I was to all purposes in Fayal. It was by no means the ragged mob the sensational writer would have painted it, but a laughing, interested crowd of men and women getting their first impressions of a strange country. It was a healthy unrest which sent them wayfaring — the hope to better their condition; friends had come before them and sent back word that America was indeed the land of

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promise; following their example, these men and women had become wayfarers, and here they were, expectant of a new hope. Some will achieve that hope and some will fail, but the achievement or the failure will rest with the individual.

The sensational writer would view this company with dismay — another regiment to be mowed down by the machine guns of capital; the apologist would point to their happy, interested faces and tell you the joy of their quest, and how much better it is to run eight looms all day and have the evenings to one's self than to till the barren soil of an island in the sea; and each writer would fall wide of the mark. Some among this company will be successful, some will fail, and so they would had they remained at home; some have increased their chance of happiness in the broader life of the New World, the others have increased the penalty of failure; but the success or failure, the happiness or discontent,

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will rest with the individual, and cannot be created by act of legislature.

A lad of seventeen, who for several years had worked at doffing in a cotton-mill, obtained a position as office-boy in another manufacturing concern. He was a keen, energetic young fellow, and his employer, ever in search of such boys to strengthen his organization when they should become men, took an unusual interest in the newcomer. One morning he noticed the boy engaged in footing up the columns of an old pay-sheet. The task seemed a useless one, and the employer asked the boy why he did it. The boy replied that, having no other work, he had asked the bookkeeper for the sheet that he might verify it, for the benefit of the practice. His employer, pleased with the reply, explained to him how eagerly men in business sought for boys of serious purpose, and commended the lad for his diligence. The boy, hesitating at first, but encouraged by his employ-

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er's interest, said, "I have wanted to tell you, sir, for a long time, how my ideas about rich men have changed since I left the mill. The men I worked with there were Socialists, and they said rich men had no hearts. I had never known a rich man, and when I came here I was afraid every time I made a mistake that I should get a beating. The first time I was sent to your private office you spoke kindly to me, and I went home that night and told my mother that rich men were sometimes just as kind as the poor."

This is a true story, and what a fearful condition it illustrates—a working boy astonished that his employer could be kind! The solution of the labor problem lies in simpler means than we imagine; we fret and fume about this and that enactment of law, while the real solution lies beyond the province of legislatures, but within the scope of each man's life—a fuller understanding of the lives of those we meet and talk with and

pass by each day. There exists a deplorable ignorance on the part of the smug and comfortable concerning the lives of those who toil, and a similar ignorance obtains among the workers concerning those who employ them.

When I was a boy playing about my father's machine-shop, I watched a man boring castings, and to-day I saw the same man working on the same machine, and still boring holes. What a text this might give the pessimist for his sermon: how he would picture the despair of this man's life, and what an arraignment he would make of the factory system! Yet if he knew the man as I have come to know him, he would find him to be just another mortal on his certain journey from the cradle to the grave. He is a great gentleman in his own set, this borer of holes, and in the past quarter of a century has saved from his wages what his shopmates deem quite a fortune. He goes to church every Sunday with his daughter,

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a college girl, in whose education he takes a pardonable pride. He is a philosopher withal; he has looked out upon the world, and it has meant something to him. He owns the house in which he lives, and believes that there should be a property qualification for voters. He tells me that it is a mistake for a man never to take a vacation, and every year he goes to New York for a week, to correct his perspective. Sometimes in the summer he goes to Newport for a day, but he does not approve of the summer capital—the residents live to no purpose, they seem bent on killing time. Hours to him are synonymous with dollars, and dollars with the education of children. This workingman, the facts seem to prove, is not the miserable creature the disciples of Mr. Ruskin would have us believe; and, although his horizon is limited, he has advanced a step beyond the office-boy—he knows that his employer may be kind, but he has not learned that the man who gives

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ten thousand dollars to a hospital, and the moment the check is written forgets it, is still capable of self-sacrifice.

Some fifteen years ago "The Coffee Tavern" was one of the most interesting institutions in the City of the Dinner-Pail. Primarily the purpose of the Tavern was to provide a temperance restaurant for workingmen, and connected with it were rooms for reading and recreation. Soon, however, there came a demand for something more than mere entertainment. Over the games of pool and checkers discussions arose concerning labor and capital, and the men asked for a class in political economy. Thus an educational work was begun which resulted in a few workingmen and a few employers of labor becoming better acquainted.

The directors of the Tavern, among whom were several large employers of labor, met once a week about the round table which was the one conspicuous orna-

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ment of the directors' room, the regular dinner was served, and the affairs of the institution were discussed. Incidentally other matters were touched upon, and time out of number the great problem of labor and capital was talked over, from two very different points of view, by the workingmen in the main dining-room and the directors seated about the round table. After dinner employer and employee smoked their pipes and played games together, and each returned to the factory with a higher regard for the opinions of the other.

There was a debating club which met at the Tavern on Sunday afternoons, at the meetings of which some speaker, in an address limited to thirty minutes, presented the subject, after which a ruler was passed from hand to hand, the possessor of the talisman being allowed five minutes in which to add to the weight of the speaker's argument or to refute his thesis. The men who debated were workingmen, — unedu-

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cated, brutalized, as some writers would have us believe; yet I have often heard at the Tavern, on Sunday afternoon, debates which would have done credit to many a state senate.

In looking over a file filled with forgotten notes concerning the labor problem, I chanced upon a manuscript written several years ago by one Thomas Evans, who signed himself "Justice of the Peace and Old Labor Agitator." It brought to mind the figure of an aged Englishman,—a native of Lancashire,—rough, unkempt, forceful, but one whose eyes looked out with kindness on the world in which he lived. All about him he saw conditions crying for reform; he knew the times were out of joint, and believed with his whole heart that he had been born to set them right. Thomas Evans was a remarkable man; lacking culture, he had the mind of a scholar; in the manuscript he failed to dot his *i*'s and cross his *t*'s, but his reason-

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ing was clear and his argument masterful. When I first knew him as a Coffee Tavern debater, he was an old man and down on his luck, as the saying is, despised by the manufacturers for being a labor agitator, hated by the workingmen for conceding the fact that sometimes the capitalist is not in error. He was very poor in worldly goods, but rich in his love for men. Later, some well-meaning gentlemen made it possible for him to spend his last days in a home for aged people, but his stay there was brief: he longed for the activities of a busy world; he preferred poverty with doing to comfort with inaction; and after a few weeks he left the Home and returned to his attic and the crust of bread. Enfeebled by age, he could no longer win even a meagre living; he spent a few weeks in the poorhouse, but then his indomitable will again sent him forth into the world of men, where for a few days he fought his last brave battle. One afternoon his totter-

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ing form appeared in the public square; a group of idlers gathered about him, and the old agitator made his last harangue. To his hearers it seemed the incoherent mutterings of a madman; the police arrested him, he was adjudged insane, and sent to the asylum, where he died. Thomas Evans, J. P., was buried in a pauper's grave, but his message to mankind can never die; his life, as the world counts it, was a failure, — he died in poverty, — but who can tell what influences for the good of man he set in motion? Reading the manuscript, I found many familiar passages, bringing to mind his talks in the Sunday afternoon debates at the Coffee Tavern; and I can suggest the nature of these debates no better than by quoting one or two passages from this essay, entitled "A Common-Sense Sermon on the Labor Problem."

"Society," he says, "has the wrong notion that statesmen lead public opinion and originate reforms; but this is merely a

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political dose for the simples. Statesmen do not lead public opinion, they follow it. Reforms have to germinate and develop among the people themselves; statesmen are simply the instruments to carry out the collective will of a nation, and all legislation that anticipates the will of society must fail. Schoolmasters must sow before statesmen can reap. We hear much said about consistency of thought, and in my humble opinion it is a monstrous humbug to call it a moral virtue, because all social progress is the result of changes of opinion. What some people call consistency of thought, common sense tells me is mental stagnation. The great question before the country to-day, the labor question, can never be settled by salary-grabbing politicians. We must be Christians first and partisans afterwards. Common sense tells me there can be no political question which is not also a religious question; and all real progress must be by honest legislation; such legislation,

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however, will not come until the intelligent and industrious manhood of this country brushes aside the bigotry and prejudice, and learns with Tolstoy that we cannot be saved separately; we must be saved collectively."

This seems rare common sense, and, coming from a workingman, ought to set the smug and comfortable to thinking. The man who reasoned so clearly was not a scholar,—I devoted many hours to translating the manuscript,—but I will venture that on economic questions he could confound many a doctor of philosophy.

Let us look again at the manuscript. "In the saving grace of common sense," he writes, "trades-unionism is not a whit better off than the world of practical politics. There are surely many political trade-union leaders who trade in official salaries when manhood and true courage are the qualities most needed; common sense plainly tells me that all bigots and tyrants are not to be found among the employers of labor.

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Sectional trades-unions are not wide enough to secure the greatest good for the greatest number, and I have suffered often for daring to oppose many movements which had the support of sectional unions. We have heard a great deal about what trades-unions have done, but few labor leaders can be found with manhood and moral courage to name the cruel wrongs to thousands of helpless and defenseless fellow men and women perpetrated by the selfishness of labor leaders looking for political honors."

This workingman not only could think clearly, but he could reason impartially, and you may seek in vain among the writings of the partisans of capital for a more stinging arraignment of trade-unionism than is contained in this manuscript from the pen of the "Old Labor Agitator." Thomas Evans was not the only man among the members of the debating club whose opinions are worthy of thoughtful consideration; there were many other speakers

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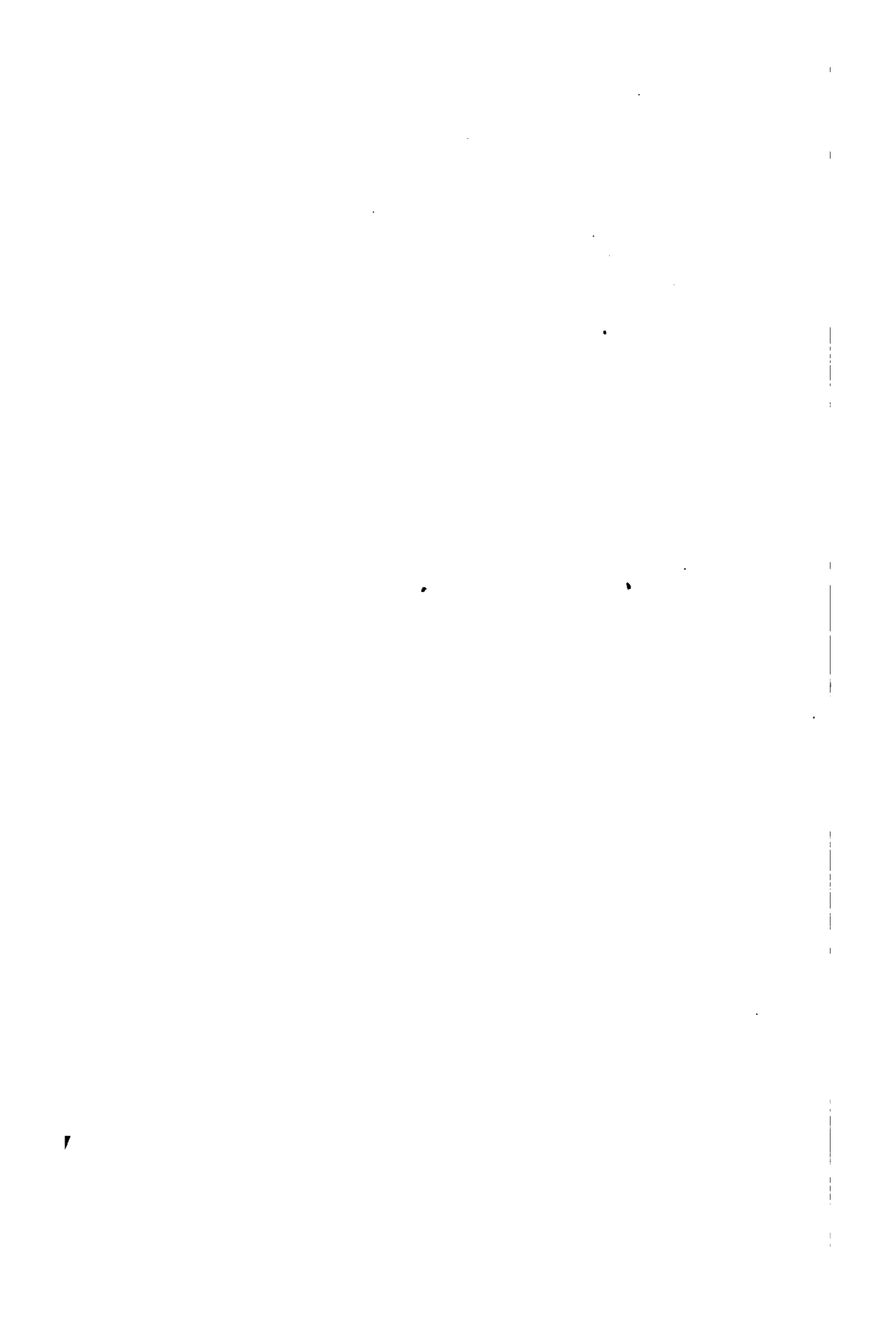
who, if they might be heard by a larger audience, would exert an influence on modern thought.

The workingmen and the employers of labor who attended these debates at the Coffee Tavern gained for themselves those benefits which an adequate criticism of the labor problem would give to the average citizen—a person mightily interested in the question if he only knew it. These men lived with the problem, and their knowledge came at first hand. No sensational writer could convince them that a revolution was imminent, nor could any apologist blind them to the evils pertaining to our present industrial system.

What these men knew the average citizen needs to know. If he will not read the books upon the library shelves, he may at least look out upon the busy world in which he lives, and try to think for himself concerning this vast problem; he can touch elbows with the man who carries the din-

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ner-pail, and learn that he is a man and not a machine; he can talk with the man who employs labor, and learn that he is not the inhuman monster the revolutionists would have us believe; then, having come to know the employer and the employee as they really are, he can set about the task of making them better acquainted.



III

THE MAN AND THE MACHINE

THE MAN AND THE MACHINE

IN modern manufacturing, economy is the dominant note. The days before the advent of steam and electricity were days of small volume of business and large profits; but to-day the reverse of this condition obtains, and we find that as a rule the ever-increasing volume of business has been accompanied by an ever-decreasing percentage of profits. Competition has reduced the margin of profits to a point where the cost of production must be kept at the minimum by every contrivance the manufacturer may invent.

Labor in its last analysis is a commodity, just as much as cotton, and is subject to the unalterable law of demand and supply; and the manufacturers who in these days of

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keen competition would keep their factories in successful operation, paying to the shareholders a just interest on their investments and at the same time furnishing thousands of workers with the means of earning a livelihood, can pay only the market-price for necessary commodities, whether cotton or labor. At the beginning of the last century the workingman and his employer were to all intents associated in business; the terms of the partnership may have been unequal, but the relationship between them was practically that which exists in any partnership. With the advent of the factory system came a change,— the employer became essentially a buyer, the workingman a seller, of labor.

Now, while labor is a commodity, like cotton, coal, oil, reeds, harnesses, or any item entering into the cost of production, there is added to it the human element, and from this springs the problem. In our age labor is not only the necessity of the poor,

but it is the ideal of the rich. A man may sell cotton at a loss and say, "Never mind; to-morrow market conditions will change and my loss may return to me as a profit." He may sell coal at a loss and look confidently to the future to reimburse him,—these things are mere material possessions; but when he sells his labor, that is quite another thing; for his labor is his own life. That is what manufacturers buy and the multitude of workingmen sell,—parts of the lives of men.

How shall we overcome the conflict between labor and capital? There is but one way, and that way lies in the recognition of the common humanity of the man who sells and the man who buys labor.

"Here also," says Carl Hilty, a Swiss thinker, "is the reason why factory labor, and, in short, all mechanical occupation in which one does but a part of the work, gives meagre satisfaction, and why an artisan who completes his work, or an agricul-

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tural laborer, is, as a rule, much more contented than factory operatives, among whom the social discontent of the modern world first uttered itself. The factory workman sees little of the outcome of his work. It is the machine that works, and he is a part of it. He contributes to the making of one little wheel, but he never makes a whole clock, which might be to him his work of art and an achievement worthy of a man."

I recognize the truth which underlies this view; I recognize the æsthetic value of hand-made things; but I insist that indiscriminate condemnation of machinery is the child of an immature imagination.

The machine is merely the man multiplied many times, and to it attaches a special dignity because it increases the power of the man to accomplish results. Let me illustrate what I mean from the industry with which I am most familiar. The art of making cloth is essentially the same in the great mills in the City of the Dinner-Pail

to-day as it was centuries ago, when the first textile fabric was woven. Then the raw material was carded, — that is to say, it was cleaned and the fibres laid in a uniform direction by means of a comb in the hand of the carder; thus the father of Columbus carded wool; to-day huge engines perform the work of the comb, but the carding engine is operated, as was the comb in the old days, by the human hand, only the power of that hand is multiplied many thousand times. In the old days a single spinning-wheel kept one woman employed from daylight to dark, producing less yarn than the doffers now take in an hour from any one of the thousand spindles tended by a single worker; and in weaving, the power-loom merely reproduces the identical movements of the hands which wove the first textile fabric before recorded history began. The great steam engine which operates the machinery in the factory is perhaps the best illustration of this idea. A double engine of the triple

expansion Corliss type, indicated at three thousand horse-power, is capable of producing the power required to raise ninety-nine million pounds to the height of one foot in one minute. How many laborers, think you, would be necessary to accomplish this tremendous task? And the machine itself is the perfection of mechanical skill: in it is the perfect adaptation of means to the end; it is the visible expression of intellectual as well as physical power, for by it the irresistible forces of nature are controlled and directed by the will of man.

One step further. The word "machine" in its first meaning is a contrivance, — a means; in its broadest meaning it is any organization by which a desired effect is produced. Thus the whole factory is itself one great machine which the manager operates, as the weaver operates his loom; and just as the weaver must understand his machine in all its parts, — the gears, the pulleys, the shafts, the cams, — so must

the manager understand his men, who are the gears, the pulleys, the shafts, the cams, of his greater machine.

As we walk through the factories and observe the operatives standing by their machines, we are liable to confuse the man with the machine, to fail to make the distinction between labor and the laborer, between the commodity and the man who sells the commodity.

“I have worked on the same machine for twenty years,” once said the old slasher-tender, to whom I have already referred, “until I have come to know the machine—and the machine to know me.” The statement is very suggestive, and the workingman who made it had the imagination of a poet. “I have come to know the machine—and the machine to know me.” In a sense the man does become a part of the machine he operates; and the more he becomes a part of it, the more effective will be his day’s work. He becomes a part

of the machine in that his intelligence animates it, in that he makes himself the master of his instrument.

The man who had the imagination to make the statement just quoted was not brutalized by twenty years of labor operating machinery. I know this man in his own home, and I believe that in his daily life he deserves, as few of us do, the name of Christian gentleman ; and his wife, although day in and day out for many years she has tended eight looms in a Fall River cotton mill, deserves, as few women I have had the honor to know, the rare title of lady.

Let us take this man and this woman as types of the brutalized working people, and in their home seek further light concerning the problem. The husband came to this country from Lancashire in early manhood, being then by trade, as he is now, a slasher-tender. The wife came to America in childhood, attended the public schools until by law she was permitted to work,

when she became an eight-loom weaver. After their marriage and a wedding journey from the church to their tenement, they returned to their work, and in the ten or twelve years following, saved enough from their wages to buy a comfortable home, costing perhaps three thousand dollars, and had in the savings banks a balance sufficient to make it seem to them that the wife might with prudence leave her looms in the noisy weave-room and devote her time to her home and the two daughters, for whom she had the ambition that they might receive an education which would remove them beyond the walls of a factory. Her life of comparative ease was brief, for within two years another child was born; and after a time, fearing that the added expense of bringing up the newcomer endangered the fulfillment of her ambition to educate her daughters, she returned to the factory, and remained there until she had made her vision a reality.

This is but one of many similar instances which have come under my personal observation. I am not familiar enough with the man with the hoe to venture an opinion, but as regards the man who operates the machine, I cannot believe that he stands bowed by the weight of centuries, or that the influence of the machine in itself is brutalizing. There is much in the modern factory system that is brutalizing, and reforms are necessary. These reforms can come only when the man who buys labor learns that he who sells labor is a human being like himself, and when the employee comes to the realization that his master is not a monster whose one thought is to grind the workingman under his feet. Laws may be enacted — should be enacted; but before they can avail greatly, a better social understanding must exist between the man who buys and the man who sells labor.

We have seen that labor is a commodity, just as any other necessity which enters into

the cost of production is a commodity; but there is added to it the human element, and this makes the buying of it the most difficult task which confronts the manufacturer. The manager of a cotton mill buys cotton, and nobody is interested except himself and the broker who sells it; he buys coal, and nobody cares about the terms of the trade except himself and the dealer who sells it; but when he buys labor, not only does his trade mean much to him, much to the few hundred individuals with whom he makes his bargain, but it means much to the whole army of the dinner-pail, which daily answers to the rollcall in all the factories throughout the land.

Let us now inquire more specifically into the problem, and see how, outside any appeal to law, a better understanding may be brought about between the man who buys and the man who sells labor. To this end we may take a concrete example. There exists to my own knowledge one factory,

which for half a century has exemplified in its management the ideal for which I am contending. It is a small concern, employing at the most not more than three hundred hands. The superintendent knows each of his men personally; he talks with them about the things nearest to them, the little happenings in their home life, which are to them as dear as are the joys and sorrows which lighten or make dark his own fireside. In event of an accident to any of them, the doctor's bills are paid and their places held for them until their recovery. In the fifty years of this corporation's history, it has been called upon to defend in court but one tort case, and that brought by a miserable fellow with an illustrious criminal record, who tempted Providence to crown it by perjuring himself to obtain a few dollars from those who for twenty years had befriended him. In the fifty years of the history of this corporation there has occurred but one strike, brought about by

walking delegates who knew nothing of the conditions which obtained there; and that strike lasted but seven days, when the men returned in a body under the conditions which had previously existed.

The method here employed may be called utopian, but the results prove it to be practical. At the same time, the two incidents cited illustrate the difficulties which the manufacturer encounters in establishing a better social understanding with the workman. The man who sells labor, as a rule, misunderstands his employer quite as often as the manufacturer misunderstands him. He fails to realize that his employer is a human being, endowed with an immortal soul, who has the welfare of his employees at heart; he fears the Greeks bearing gifts, and cannot understand that the man who buys labor may act from an altruistic motive. He often assumes the same attitude toward his employer which he fancies that his employer holds toward

him, and he makes the meanest, the most selfish motives the basis of his trade. In my personal experience, the man who is most thoroughly hated by his employees is the man who has the physical, mental, and spiritual welfare of his workingmen most at heart.

I can imagine some will say that, granting all I have claimed for the corporation referred to, nevertheless it employs but a handful of men, and when we attempt to apply the same methods in a great corporation, employing thousands, we face a different problem. Here neither the manager, the superintendent, nor the overseer can know personally each man in his employ. This is indeed true; but the manager can claim from all the men in his employ the same loyalty, the same devotion, which the great general commands from his troops. There is in the City of the Dinner-Pail a man who employs as many thousand operatives as the corporation we have referred

to employs hundreds; yet with him the same conditions obtain, and the explanation is the one I have suggested,—this man possesses the essential qualities of a great general.

If the factory be a small one, giving work to a hundred men, the manager may know each personally; but if it be a large one, so that such personal acquaintance is impracticable, he may know them as a general knows his army,—he may inspire them, if he be a great man, with his own spirit. But, says the doubtful one, this offscouring of the world, these men akin only to brutes, will not respond to leadership. Said Emerson, “What a force was coiled up in the skull of Napoleon! Of the sixty thousand men making his army at Eylau, it seems some thirty thousand were thieves and burglars. The men whom in peaceful communities we hold with iron at their legs, in prisons, under the muskets of sentinels,—this man dealt with hand to hand, dragged

them to their duty, and won his victories by their bayonets." Do you believe that, after the victory, those thirty thousand men thought as thieves and burglars, or needed to be held in irons? And again, bowed as low by the weight of centuries as the pessimist would have us believe these men to be, still are they men capable of infinite development, animated with the mighty impulse which compels the race to rise from worst to better, from better to best.

The relation of the man of business to the thousands in his employ is in a measure comparable with the relation which existed in another time between the feudal lord and his retainers. The retainers served their master in the great game of war; to-day the workingman serves his master in the great game of business; but with this difference — loyalty was the ideal of service in the one; in hatred does the other serve. To accomplish the highest results in the commercial régime, loyalty must be engen-

dered in the soul of the operative. This cannot be accomplished in a day, it must be the result of slow but certain growth based on a recognition of the common humanity of the man who buys and the man who sells labor. The feudal lord and his retainers understood one another because they fought in the same cause, faced side by side the same physical peril, used the same weapons. At the end of the battle master and man sought the gift of sleep in the same camp. They were comrades. It is not so to-day; the master fights for power, the man for his daily bread; the master fights with his mind, the man with his body; one sleeps in restless misery in his mansion, the other sleeps in discontent in his tenement.

Let us now take a purely practical standpoint and look at some of the facts concerning a great strike in the textile world, which for five months prostrated an industry representing a capitalization of fifty million dollars, condemned to idleness twenty-seven

thousand operatives, and filled with misery and discontent a city of one hundred and twenty thousand persons.

The strike was brought on by a cut-down in wages of twelve and one-half per cent. At the time, the manufacturers were at their wits' end in an attempt to operate the factories without a loss of profit in competition with Southern mills, which then enjoyed a temporary advantage in cheapness of labor, then, as now, unorganized. It is due to the secretaries of the textile unions to say that they opposed a strike, as the conditions pointed to certain victory for the manufacturers. In the excitement of the moment, hatred, resentment, prejudice, prevailed, and the unions voted to quit work unless the old schedule of wages was restored. The condition was impossible, the manufacturers justly made no concession, and the long strike ensued.

A suggestive fact should here be noted: the labor leaders opposed the strike, the

sentiment of the majority of workers was against resistance, for but twenty-five hundred out of twenty-seven thousand operatives voted at the meetings of the unions; yet a handful of enthusiasts, self-willed, unmindful of the common welfare, brought about by their votes a calamity the evil results of which lasted many years.

The question may rightly be asked, how did it happen, when the strike did not meet with the approval of the labor leaders and was unpopular with the mass of the workers, that it endured through so many months of bitter hardship? Why did men and women whose better judgment rebelled against an unavailing strike accept its conditions and make no concerted effort to terminate it? There are many reasons, but the main motive, I believe, was an unreasoning loyalty to the unions as embodying the ideal of the rights of the workingman. The authorities at Washington may declare what we deem an unrighteous war; but

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when the drum beats and the call comes for volunteers, we are ready to offer our lives in the service of our country,—the individual sacrifices himself to the common cause. The strike was declared by a small majority of votes cast by twenty-five hundred men and women assembled at the meetings of the unions; yet twenty-seven thousand acquiesced in the result.

This fact illustrates the power of the unions both for good and evil, and enforces the value of that ideal of loyalty to which I have alluded. The power of labor unions rests in the loyalty not only of the members, but of all working people, to the ideal which underlies the unions—the dignity of labor—the sacredness of the day's work. The fact that every workingman may not realize that he is loyal to an ideal does not alter the fact—he is loyal, and his loyalty underlies his every act. This loyalty gives a power to the unions which cannot be computed in terms of the commercial world;

it is the motive, however, animating a force which the commercial world must recognize and direct with judgment.

The power of unions is unlimited, and may be used to the physical, mental, and moral advancement of the workingman, or it may be directed to his destruction; it may serve the advancement of mankind, or it may retard the increasing purpose of the ages. The need of labor unions, as the need of a nation, is for intelligent leadership. The power is there, — who shall direct it? Steam existed countless ages before Watts, electricity before Marconi flashed his first message through miles of unresisting space; yet ages of men and women watched the steam pouring from countless teapots, and rubbed amber for an evening's amusement, before the master came to make these forces the willing servants of mankind.

Allow me to intrude myself to the extent of presenting my personal impressions of the great strike, first explaining my

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individual relation to the employers and employees. In a small way I am directly an employer of labor, — the machine-shops to which I give my daily attention employ perhaps three hundred hands; the cotton factories in the management of which I am indirectly associated, several thousand. From a purely commercial standpoint, then, my bias should have been toward the welfare of the manufacturers. For fifteen years, however, I have been associated with St. John's parish, composed of Lancashire working people and their American children. My association with them has been as intimate as my association with the manufacturers; perhaps more intimate, because the less highly organized the social development, the greater the possibility of intimate relations. I have had the honor of officiating as best man at the wedding of an employee, of serving, in the absence of a clergyman, at the burial of a workingman's child, of holding the hand of a laborer in

his last hour of life; and if I have any message relating to the labor problem, it is this,—the values of life are relative, and be the man born to wealth or poverty, his instincts and emotions are the same.

The great strike was declared; labor faced capital in open battle; market conditions proclaimed that the cause of labor was lost; capital would suffer greatly, but in the end would be victorious because in this instance its cause was just. Twenty-seven thousand men and women were out on a strike; this number included the people of all nations,—English and French, Irish, Portuguese, Italians, Poles, and Jews; men and women whom the smug and comfortable term the offscouring of Europe. You might have expected a demonstration of force from this army; but when at daylight the engines turned over in the deserted factories, and the few workers, either without loyalty to an ideal or possessed with keener vision than their fellows, answered the

summons of the bells, beyond a few broken windows, there were no evidences of violence. Later in the day the streets of the city presented no unusual sights, except that they were more crowded, as on a holiday. Men and women, who under normal conditions would have been standing by their machines increasing the wealth of a nation, stood gazing into shop windows enjoying a leisure unknown for years. Here and there little groups gathered about one more earnest than his fellows, who harangued a listless audience concerning the rights of man. At nightfall the crowd dispersed, and a stranger could have found no evidences that a great battle was being waged in the city.

In a few days mass-meetings were held in the theatre, at which speeches were made by men conspicuous in the labor movement, urging the workers to be true to the cause,—but still no violence. The workers were self-contained, confident of

victory. Only once was there an occurrence suggesting public disorder. This happened after weeks of resistance, when the hardships of the battle had become well-nigh unendurable. At the close of a mass-meeting a weaver, braver than his fellows, spoke the truth, his motive being the common good. He had the intelligence to understand the situation, the vision to see that the existing conditions pointed to certain defeat for the labor cause; he had the courage of his convictions and spoke his mind. In a moment the meeting was in an uproar, and a mob followed the man of convictions through the main street. The man was rescued by the police, and the crowd dispersed. The next day he returned to his looms, and a few followed him. To-day his name is a name of reproach in the City of the Dinner-Pail; but his little service to the cause of labor will live always.

While the workers were holding mass-meetings, striving by every ingenuity to

maintain a lost cause, the representatives of capital were immersed in the endeavor to start the factories, to supplant in a thousand homes want with plenty, despair with hope. They fancied the workingman to be their enemy, they fought selfishly, as did their opponents; but in this instance they fought in the cause of right. Physical suffering was the lot of the laborer,—cold, hunger, pain. Mental stress was the lot of the manufacturer,—the determined effort to achieve, the terror of defeated hope, defeated ambition. Recognition of one fundamental fact would have relieved in a moment all this bodily suffering and mental stress,—the fact that whatever conditions benefit capital must benefit labor as well, and that any measure which, adopted, would be of lasting benefit to the one, must of necessity be of permanent advantage to the other. The forces of labor and the forces of capital waged a fierce battle, yet their interests were identical. Each side

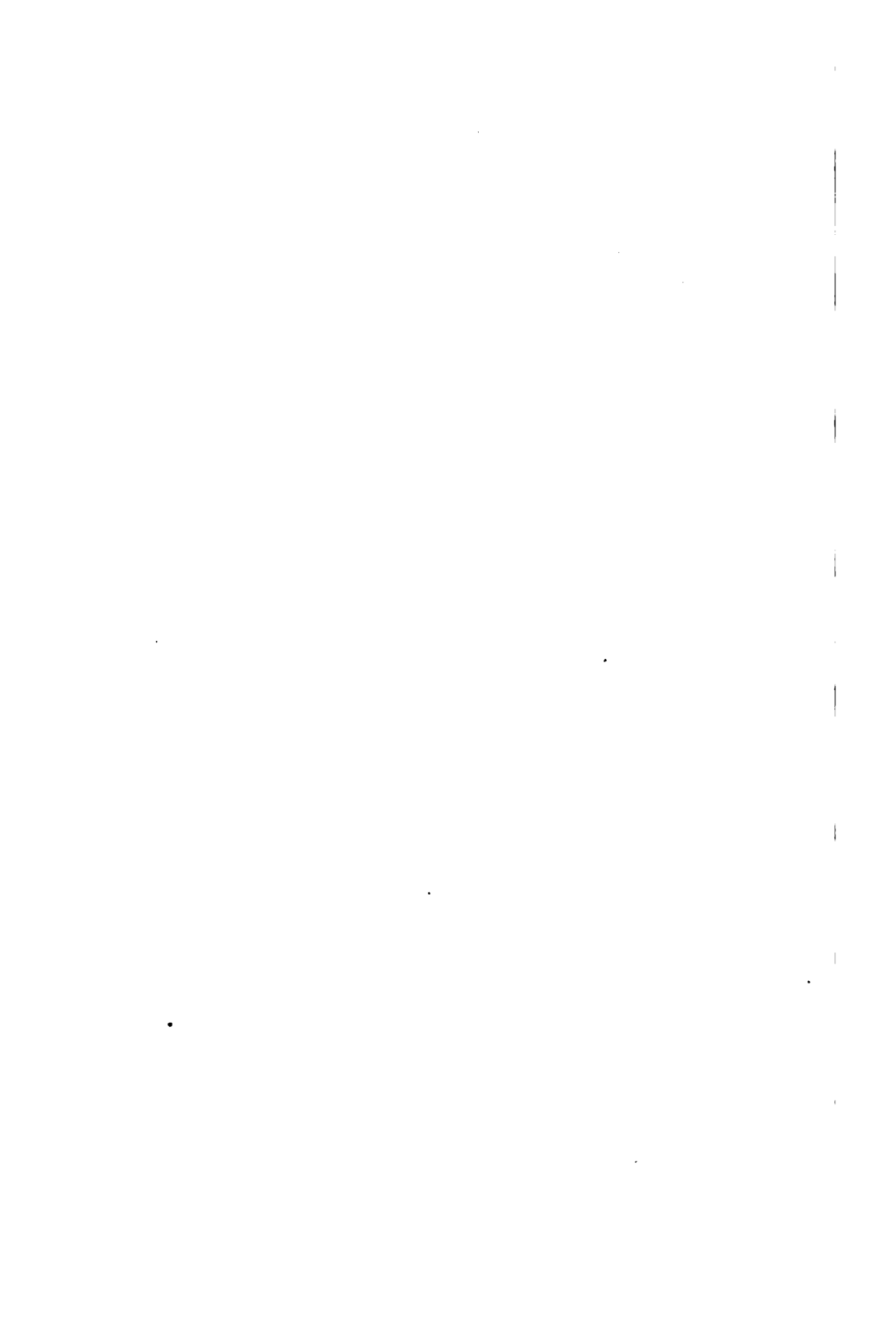
suffered hardships, springing from a common cause; the battle fought by capital, rightly analyzed, was not against labor, but against market conditions, and the battle of labor was against the same conditions. If, instead of contending with one another, these two forces had united in the common cause, untold suffering might have been avoided.

In the end a conference was arranged to be held at the State House, the governor of the commonwealth acting within certain limits as arbitrator. The governor was a manufacturer and a large employer of labor, who, in spite of the fact, was elected to his high office by the enthusiastic support of the labor vote. He exemplified in his relation to his employees an ideal previously suggested. He could not know personally each man and woman in his employ; but his spirit of fair play animated his workers as the spirit of a great general animates his army, and they were ready with

their enthusiasm, when the opportunity came, to place him in a position of influence and opportunity. They had for him that loyalty which should exist on the part of all working people toward their employers, and he inspired their loyalty only because his humane attitude toward them compelled their devotion.

The conference was held in the State House, and the strike was ended. The solution was a simple matter. The margin between the cost of the amount of cotton required to make a cut of cloth and the market price of the same cut of cloth under the old schedule of wages was to be taken as a basis, and wages in the future were to be computed on that basis; a four per cent advance, representing the margin then existing, was to be made at once, and wages were to vary weekly with the fluctuations of the market. No plan could be devised of greater advantage to the man who bought and the man who sold labor; both would

share alike in the advance or depression of market conditions. A few days after the conference, smoke again poured from the factory chimneys, the whirr of the spindles and the ceaseless clatter of shuttles were again joyful sounds within the factory walls; at the bell hour the army of the dinner-pail again responded to rollcall,— the long strike was ended.



IV

THE TIME-CLOCK

THE TIME-CLOCK

LABOR is a commodity, just as is cotton, coal, or any other material making up the cost of production; but there is added to it the human element, and out of this fact arises the labor problem. This problem includes every question at issue between employer and employee, whether it concerns wages, hours of labor, or sanitary conditions, and, rightly analyzed, is a matter of bargain between the man who buys and the man who sells labor. To understand the labor problem, we must first know something of the factory system which is one source of the present social unrest.

In the beginning the factory was the creation, not of capital, but of labor; not of the employer, but of the workingman.

It was a natural growth out of the home system of manufacture, under which raw material, either bought by the workman himself or given out to him by a second party, was manufactured into the finished product in the home. The transition from the home to the factory system may be studied at first hand in some countries to-day. In Japan, for instance, practically all the spinning of yarn is done in factories, while the larger part of the cloth is made on hand-looms in the homes of the weavers. The first spinning-mill was undoubtedly built by some thrifty spinner who, obtaining more work than he could well do with his own hands, hired a few less capable workmen to assist him; afterwards he hired others, until the rooms of his house were too small to contain them and the machinery; then he built a shed devoted to his business, and this shed became the first cotton factory in Japan. Our own industrial development has been sim-

ilar, and the conditions which we may observe to-day in Japan once existed in America.

In the early days of the nineteenth century a machinist's apprentice became a journeyman, and received from his master, as was the custom in those days, a new suit of clothes and fifty dollars in money. He left the town in which he lived, and sought employment in a neighboring village, where several cotton-mills had been built. The mill in which he found work would be of interest to one familiar with the great plants of to-day; the owners, the superintendent, the workers, were all New England folk, among whom there was no social distinction. Tradition says that the weavers sat in rocking-chairs beside the newly-invented power-looms, and that some brought knitting to the mill to occupy their spare time, while others cultivated flowers in window-boxes; but, rocking-chairs or no, employer and employee began work at the same hour

each morning, returned home at the same hour in the evening, and after they had "washed up" and the supper dishes were put away, spent their evenings together.

The power-loom seemed a marvel of ingenuity to the young machinist; he watched the machines turning out their useful product, and repaired them when they failed to work. Then the thought occurred to him that some day he might build looms and sell them to the cotton factories. He became acquainted with another machinist, who had already made a start in this direction, and the two young men formed a partnership, built a small shop, and commenced business. They associated with them a few other machinists, and from bell-hour to bell-hour, employers and employees worked side by side at the bench and lathe. The owners of the shop and the men who worked with them were friends and neighbors who went to church and singing school together, and

in social life met as equals. In the shop disputes would arise concerning the hours of labor and the amount of work which might reasonably be expected from each man in his twelve hours of daily toil, and these questions were quarreled out in the evening.

As years went by and the business grew larger, the employers ceased to work at the bench and lathe. One became superintendent and devoted his time to overseeing the work of the men; the other became treasurer and attended to financial affairs, keeping the books, buying the iron, selling the machinery, and to other matters incident to the general management; but this change in occupation did not alter the close personal relation between them and the men in their employ.

The shop produced a great variety of work,—not only power-looms, but steam-engines, turbine water-wheels, machine tools, shafting, hangers, pulleys, and other

appliances for the transmission of power, hydraulic presses, and, as is impressively stated in an advertisement of the day, "machinery generally." Twenty men working together in the little shop were able to produce this vast array of mechanical devices; but each of these twenty men was a machinist who had served an apprenticeship of from five to seven years. The worker knew each machine he operated, and could make the machine with his own hands; the age of specialization — division of labor, it is called in the factory system — lay in the future.

The machinist's son became associated with him in business. He did not learn the trade, for by this time ability in finance was as essential to the success of the concern as mechanical skill; and the conditions which the son faced were more complex than the conditions the father knew; for the little machine-shop had become a modern manufacturing establishment. The

treasurer sat at his desk in the office; the superintendent had his desk, and under him were foremen who were responsible for the several departments of the plant. The traditions of an older day were still vital, a close personal relation existed between employer and employee; but the organization was more complex and the possibility of misunderstanding proportionately increased. Moreover, industrial conditions were changing, competition was becoming keen, the era of small profits and large volume of business was commencing.

In the later days of the century a grandson of the machinist sat at the treasurer's desk. His task would have been unimaginable to the machinist: there were letters to be dictated to a stenographer, not written out in a bold, round hand; there were cost-sheets to be examined — they had not been so particular as to the costs in the old days; the market reports had to be studied — there were no market reports in the days

of the machinist. The grandfather once sold a few water-wheels in the Southern States, and made two tedious journeys, much of the way by stage; the grandson received by mail and telegraph from the South daily inquiries for machinery, and sometimes closed the bargain by telephone. Steam and electricity had annihilated distance; the old order had passed, giving place to the new; division of labor became a necessity.

Inside the factory conditions were quite as changed as in the office. One man bored holes, another turned studs, each had his little share to contribute to the finished whole. One hundred men, each making a whole machine, might in a year build one hundred small steam-engines; but one man could bore many hundred cylinders, and another could turn many hundred cranks; and thus under the changed conditions a hundred engines could be built in the time formerly required to build one. The machin-

ist gave seven years of his life to learning his trade: he was taught how to run a lathe, standing before it sometimes fourteen hours a day; hand and eye were trained by countless repetition of the same process, until the man and the machine became one; meanwhile he had learned to sharpen tools. In a modern shop, tool-sharpening is specialized: day in and day out men point bits of steel; but after a time the apprentice knew this trade as well as the best tool-sharpener. Specialization has increased the efficiency of the shop as an organization, but it has decreased the efficiency of the individual worker as a thinking creature. Under the factory system the individuality of the worker is lost in the great organization of which he is a part; officially he has ceased to have a name.

Much of our industrial discontent arises from the time-clock, or rather from the thought for which the time-clock stands. Wherever the time-clock is in use, each

worker is known by a number. He pushes a button on the clock door when he commences or quits work, setting the mechanism in motion; the gears revolve, a little lever falls and prints in blue or red ink the information that "207-6.59" or "207-7.01"; which means that Christopher Cassidy, a citizen of the United States of America and in the employ of the Union Steel Company, came to the factory that day at one minute before seven, or else that he was one minute late, for which offense the time-keeper is to dock his pay a quarter of an hour. Now, while it is quite right to fine a man for being a minute late in getting to his work,—if it has become a fixed habit,—it is equally wrong to rob him of his name if the crime may be avoided.

To condemn the use of the time-clock would be absurd, for this ingenious instrument has become a necessity in thousands of factories where great numbers of work-

ingmen are employed; and no toiler can complain that the record it prints is incorrect, for when he presses the button he becomes his own time-keeper; yet the relation between the employer and the employee which the time-clock symbolizes is wholly bad. This relation is graphically set forth in a circular I once read, advertising these machines. "Do you employ one hundred hands?" it asked; "do you realize what the loss of five minutes a day by each man means to you in loss of profits in one year? Suppose your average wage is two dollars a day; fifteen hundred hours at twenty cents an hour. Three hundred dollars! Think of it! And if you employ a thousand hands your loss will be three thousand dollars. Can you afford this?"

At first it would seem that the only answer to the question must come in the form of an order for clocks; but upon reflection the employers may reply: "Possibly I can and possibly I cannot. If I consider each

man in my employ as a machine which the overseer sets in motion each morning, as the operative starts his loom by pressing the shipper-handle, I cannot afford it. But if I look upon the worker as a man capable of infinite growth, then the three hundred or three thousand dollars may be as nothing in my cost of manufacturing. The day does not begin at any given moment. A man may press his button on the time-clock promptly at seven every morning in the year, yet the same man may cheat me out of three hundred hours every twelve months."

The amount of work which each man accomplishes during the day depends upon other factors than the mere hours of labor; and the most important of these factors is the spirit in which the work is done. And the spirit of the day's work will depend upon the personal relation which exists between the office and the workshop. If the employer is once known to be interested

in the welfare of his men, they will be, more truly than otherwise, his retainers, more zealous for the prosperity of his business; but if his relation to them is that of a task-master, they will be his slaves, merely, and quite capable of any treachery. The effort of the employer who would gain the loyal service of his men must be to preserve in every way possible the individuality of the employee, to emphasize his manhood, and thus to increase his self-respect.

A friend of mine employs several thousand hands in his factories; he is a man who knows from his own experience the meaning of the day's toil, for he worked at the trade in his youth and belongs to that class of "risen workmen" that Shadwell calls hard task-masters. He, however, is a most humane employer. Understanding from experience "time-clock" conditions, and knowing that the industrial value of a man is increased with the belief in the im-

portance of his own work, this employer has adopted every means to develop in his employees a sense of their individuality. This is illustrated by the system of fines which is enforced in each department of his works. The man who in a week makes the most imperfect parts, loses a small percentage of his pay, and his loss goes as a prize to the man who makes the least bad work. In the main office a chained book is hung, and in it are recorded the mistakes made by the clerks; no penalty is exacted for these mistakes, but each clerk, by reading the record, may profit by the errors of the others; and it has come to be considered a fearful disgrace for one to have his name entered in the book, so vitally does the plan appeal to the individuality of the employee. This employer also knows that the care of the body is the first step toward developing a sense of self-respect, and he has provided proper bathing facilities for his workers, means for warming the dinners brought to

his factory in a thousand dinner-pails, and a playground for field sports on Saturday afternoons; and he has spent many thousand dollars in improving the sanitary conditions of his plants. But, more than this, he is easily accessible to his men. His private office is carefully guarded, for his time is too valuable to be wantonly wasted. I have seen a dozen men sitting outside his door, waiting their turn to be received: trusted representatives of great selling houses; buyers of goods seeking to establish business relations with his firm; perhaps a wealthy philanthropist collecting funds for private charity; and all men of no little consequence as viewed by the laborer who diffidently enters the office. But this same laborer has but to write his name on a piece of paper, and the busy man promptly receives him — so firmly does he cling to that spirit of equality which characterized, in a marked degree, the early days of the factory system.

Side by side with the industrial development of the factory system, there went a "social" development, using the word in its narrow meaning as referring to that body of the elect which worships at the shrine of fashion. Even to-day the stratification of "Society" is one of the most interesting phenomena to the student of social conditions in a manufacturing community. The factory system is indeed, as Arthur Shadwell has said, "the history of workingmen rising to be employers"; and in the process, by the acquisition of wealth and a degree of leisure, there comes a change in the manner of living. On the surface it is a small matter — the bean-supper becomes a dinner-party, the public ball a dancing-party, and the morning bath supersedes the Saturday night tubbing; but to the student of social conditions all this has a real significance.

The machinist who founded the corporation, the development of which we have just traced, lived simply, as did the men in

his employ; his wife was cook, parlor-maid, and seamstress, and it was owing to her frugality more than to any other factor that he was able to create an establishment which to-day furnishes employment to several hundred machinists, each living under social conditions similar to those he knew. His son never wore overalls and jumper, never worked at the bench and lathe, and he was given an education which made his father's associates shake their heads and prophesy certain failure in life for the boy, so great was their distrust of "book-learning." The grandson of the machinist went to college, and his business failure was predicted. It would be difficult for one unfamiliar with the conditions to realize the contempt with which an old-time machinist, trained under the apprentice system, looks upon a young man educated in a technical school, or how firm is his conviction that a college-bred man must fail hopelessly if he enters business. Machinists of this

class may be found in any large shop; they are the survivors from an older day, before imagination came to be the first essential of commercial success, and form the human links which unite the age of steam to the days of the stage-coach. In their reminiscences we may trace with authority the changes which have taken place in the relation of employer and employee with the growth of the factory system.

The social world in which the grandson lived had, like the industrial conditions, become complicated. If the machinist by some unlucky chance put a steel knife to his mouth, he might still be invited to the next bean-supper; but should the grandson fail to call either in person or by pasteboard on his hostess of two weeks before, his name might be dropped from her list. This social aspect had its influence in creating the labor problem, for the personal touch between employer and employee necessarily became weaker and weaker with the pro-

gress of social development. Moreover, an aristocracy of wealth arose in which the heartless condescension of an aristocracy of blood was emphasized by a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*. It is no less a sin to look down upon a man because his grandfather did not live on Beacon Hill than to despise him because he earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow; but the latter sin is the more obvious.

I sometimes look out of my window when the bell rings from the schoolhouse across the street; the children who come up the hill are ragged, some of them, while some, who come from the opposite direction, are brought in fine carriages driven by liveried coachmen. On the surface they belong to different classes, yet their fathers are engaged in the same business—the making of cotton cloth. It is true that their fathers go in different social “sets,” yet in the mill the labor of each is essential to the welfare of the industry. The children,

however, are of the same "set," and in the democracy of the schoolyard mingle in their play, for as yet they have not learned the tremendous significance of clothes. The father of one of the children, who came to school in a motor-car, was offered a position of trust in a factory, and his little daughter, when she heard the news, cried, fearing that she might be asked to carry his dinner to him in a pail. When the girl is grown to be a woman, she may laugh at this incident, yet it is full of significance. There are many families in every manufacturing town which conform to the democracy of the schoolyard—men and women, who, in their attitude toward the toilers, foretell that better understanding between the man who buys and the man who sells labor, which is the solution of the present problem; because they have not worked with their hands, they are better able to view the complex life of the community in true perspective; but during the process

of rising from bench and lathe to leather-bottomed chair and desk telephone, the workingman is apt to view the problem with distorted vision.

The history of the machine shops which we have here briefly considered is the history, I believe, of nearly all similar manufacturing companies in the country, and the facts in the development of the factory system which we have observed in a particular case are applicable, also, to other industries.

In the history of the factory system two main factors appear which have a direct bearing on our modern industrial unrest, both tending to minimize the importance of the individual worker and to create a laboring and an employing class. Division of labor is the first of these factors—the expression in the industrial world of that specialization which in scholarship has replaced the broader culture of our fathers with the more precise learning of to-day,

and in the professions has given us doctors of medicine whose knowledge of anatomy is confined to a single organ, lawyers who are unable to address a jury, and clergymen who cannot preach sermons. I am not arguing against this specialization, — there is much to be said to its advantage; but it has a tendency, in the professions, to a narrower culture, and in the workshop, to the elimination of the individuality of the worker.

Division of labor was made a necessity by the discovery of the power of steam and electricity, which united nation with nation, thus creating a world-market. It was the need for a larger production which compelled the son of the machinist, quite unconsciously, to adopt the new system; and the moment he adopted it, the individuality of each worker in his employ counted for less. The loss of the individuality of the worker under the factory system was, I believe, the direct cause of unionism. The worker could no longer approach his

employer directly as man to man, and in order to make himself of force he was compelled to combine his efforts with the efforts of others, and unionism was the result.

The value of trade-unions is a subject too broad for our present discussion, but that the movement is of value to the workingman cannot be denied. That it may serve the employer in his relation with the employee, I believe, is likewise true. Grave mistakes have been made by organized labor, such as opposition to the introduction of improved machinery, the attempt to limit the number of apprentices, and the many abuses in vogue in union shops; but the movement is growing in strength, and, as it grows, becomes more conservative. It is hard to believe that less than a century ago any combination of workingmen was punishable under the common law by imprisonment, yet such is the fact. To-day not only is the right of combination encouraged by law, but privileges are granted

workingmen to further the principle of collective bargaining—a movement which seeks to place the worker in the same relation to his employer as that which existed between them in the beginning of the factory system.

The labor problem in one aspect is how justly to divide the profits of industry between the man who buys and the man who sells labor. This division of profits must accomplish two things—first, the employer must receive a fair return on his invested capital, and, second, the employee must receive a living wage. This condition obtained in the old days when master and man worked side by side in the shop; and it is to-day the condition by which a more equitable industrial order may be established. Professor Ryan has pointed out the possibility of a distribution of profits under which every capable worker may receive a living wage; the method by which he would accomplish this result—by act of

legislature — we need not here consider; but granting the possibility of a living wage, one way to establish it is by collective bargaining, based on the fact that no trade is a good one, nor in the long run profitable, unless both parties to it are satisfied. No combination of employers can long conduct an industry in which the workers are with reason discontented, and no combination of workers can continue to demand and obtain an undeserved share of the profits. The problem involved in collective bargaining is the same problem which master and man faced when they quarreled out their differences as they worked side by side in the shop, only multiplied many times; and its solution lies in the same fairness and mutual respect which, in an earlier day, restored harmony between two antagonistic shopmates — the parties to an individual bargain.

V

TRADE-UNIONISM AND THE
INDIVIDUAL WORKER



TRADE-UNIONISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER

AS we walk the streets of the City of the Dinner-Pail, enter its factories, and visit the homes of its people,—the homes alike of those who buy and those who sell labor,—we may observe in the varied life about us every phase of the labor problem, which, when viewed in the larger field of the nation, appears so complicated to the average citizen that he despairs of understanding it. If we were to study ever so casually the history of the great industry which gives the city its distinction, we should discover the source of many perplexing social questions which in America tend to separate class from class

in a manner singularly at variance with the ideals of the Republic.

In the early days of the last century, the wives of farmers who tilled the fields now traversed by the city streets, sat before the spinning-wheel and hand-loom after the work upon the farm was done, and wove the cloth from which their gowns were made; they wove linen, too, from flax grown upon their own land, and even the woolen clothes the farmer wore were the product of household industry. It is not difficult to imagine the interest of these farmer-folk in the first factory which was built upon the stream; their refusal to believe that a water-wheel might be made of sufficient power to operate so great a plant as that first factory, which in size would not serve as an engine-room for a modern spinning-mill; their wonder as they watched the imported machinery, producing more yarn in a day than a thousand hands might make on spinning-wheels

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during a long winter. We can imagine, too, how eagerly the sons and daughters of the farmers sought work in the new factory, and the pride they took in receiving their wages, paid in money and exchangeable at the village store for stylish foreign fabrics such as no farmer's wife could ever weave.

That successful first mill was followed by another and another, each indeed small, but each somewhat larger and better equipped than those that went before, and all operated by native help, with now and then a foreign worker of Irish or English birth. More factories were built, and foreigners came in great numbers to operate the machinery; but the transition from native help was so gradual that the citizens did not realize how social classes were forming in this democratic community. The newly built Roman Catholic church gave the Protestants something of a shudder, especially when its commu-

nicants celebrated Christmas; and the puritanical proprietors, who had not learned to exchange gifts in memory of our Saviour's birth, complained because the Irish refused to work on the twenty-fifth of December. Here was the first suggestion of conflicting social ideals.

The immigrants, however, had no part in the event which made evident the growth of class consciousness in the City of the Dinner-Pail; that occurred in a Baptist meeting-house and among Christian folk of the same denomination. A bill had been introduced in the state legislature limiting the hours of factory labor to ten a day, and agitation in favor of its adoption ran high. On the farm the day began at no particular hour, nor was there any stated time when work was ended, and a man was paid for a day's labor without regard to the length of it. Some, however, saw a distinction between farm and factory labor, and among these was the

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minister of the Baptist church. One Sunday at the hour of service, the congregation, in which mill-owners and operatives sat side by side, was thrown into great excitement by the pastor, who preached a sermon advocating the ten-hour bill; and when his hearers filed out of the meeting-house that morning, they were no longer a united body. The man who sold labor continued to listen to the preaching of the ten-hour parson; but the man who bought labor built for himself another meeting-house; and soon afterwards the first labor union was formed. The same causes which for years had been at work silently to create discord in the Baptist flock had at the same time been in operation in the factory, gradually separating the employer and employee in their personal relations, until at last it seemed that their interests were no longer common, and that the future success of each must be to the disadvantage of the other. So indus-

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trial warfare took the place of mutual good-will, and more than half a century passed before the contending factions began to see the folly of their antagonism.

The development of unionism was as natural as the development of the factory system, which made the association of workers necessary. So long as factory-owners and factory operatives worked side by side in the shop, so long as the man who bought and the man who sold labor belonged to the same social class, so long as a close personal relation existed between master and man, there was no need for organized labor; but when, in the complicated development of the factory system, the employer, once associated in business with the employee, found in the management of the concern his sole occupation, and became separated from the workman by a hierarchy of foremen and overseers, — the personal relation between the buyer and the seller of labor being lost, — it

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came about quite naturally that the workman combined his efforts with the efforts of others of his class in order to command collectively that consideration from the employer which each employee had received individually in the earlier stages of the factory system. First, the men in separate shops talked over their common interests in friendly discussions while at their work ; later they continued these discussions in the evening at some appointed meeting-place—and the local trade-union was born. With the growth of class consciousness, local federations of labor followed, recognizing the common interests of all hand-workers in the community ; and these federations in turn became united in a national labor movement, in which the welfare of the individual became subordinated to the welfare of the toilers as a class.

In administrative principles the national labor movement has shown two divergent

tendencies: the Knights of Labor sought to establish a strong central body, the object being to unite in a single organization all the workingmen of the nation, while the American Federation of Labor, subsequently organized, has endeavored to keep all legislative power in the hands of the several crafts—the Federation being little more than an advisory centre. This plan, recognizing in a larger measure the value of the individual, has been the more successful, for since the year 1886, when the Knights of Labor numbered over seven hundred thousand members, that body has rapidly declined in numbers and power, while the American Federation has steadily increased in influence, and to-day possesses all the machinery necessary to achieve the end for which it was created; namely, to emphasize the human element which is attached to labor as a commodity.

How well adapted to its purpose this machinery is, those who follow the events

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in the labor-world are well aware. We see how the demands for higher wages, for shorter hours, for more favorable factory conditions, have been enforced; sometimes by actual strike, more often by the mere threat on the part of the unions to call out their members. When we come to study the history of labor unions, we find that the part which the movement has played in the social progress of the toiler is greater than at first appears. The reform laws passed by the British Parliament in the last century had their beginning in the class-consciousness which arose in the manufacturing cities, following the establishment of the factory system. The first of these acts legalized combinations of workingmen, and thus liberated a force which was felt in later legislation, having for its object the amelioration of the social condition of the toilers. "Mercy by Statute"—Lord Ashley's phrase to describe the British Factory Acts, made law through

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his devoted struggle for the cause of labor — was due in no small measure to the rise of trade-unionism. As early as 1833 laws were passed to regulate the labor of children and young persons in the textile factories of the United Kingdom; but it was nearly ten years later before public attention was called to the pitiable condition of a class of juvenile workers which exceeded tenfold in number those engaged in the textile industries; and the reason for this delay is to be found in the fact that bleacheries and print-works, paper-mills, establishments for the manufacture of glass and earthenware, pins and needles, buttons, and a hundred like commodities, were not conducted on the great scale of the textile plants, nor were these industries confined to manufacturing cities, populated by men and women with common industrial and social interests. The children thus employed were neglected longer than the others, because there were no agi-

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tators to plead their cause, and no vast body of discontented workers clamoring for the amelioration of their social condition.

From the year 1824, when Parliament repealed the Combination Laws, to the Trade Disputes Act in 1906, the weapon of the British workingman in obtaining legislative benefits has been agitation through unionism. The first labor agitators in the City of the Dinner-Pail were English operatives of the same stock as the men who, a generation before, lighted the torch of individual freedom in Lancashire, and, despised by the governing classes, meeting secretly as outlaws, compelled a reluctant parliament to give heed to the rights of labor, and in the end to grant schools and the franchise to the children of toil. While in America trade-unionism had no such mighty task to accomplish, political equality being already established, the conditions of the factory system made the movement a necessary

one, and it would be idle to deny the influence of organized labor in shaping the course of legislative enactment.

Granting, then, that organized labor is possessed of the machinery necessary to obtain its object, and that this object is altogether admirable, being nothing less than winning from the industrial régime a recognition of the dignity of the laborer as a man, unionism should merit the unfaltering loyalty of every toiler. Many workingmen, however, and among them some of the most intelligent, are opposed to organized labor, and on the very ground that it detracts something from the dignity of the individual. There is evidently some phase of the movement which we have overlooked.

So far as organized labor has been successful in emphasizing the distinction between labor and the laborer, the commodity and the man who sells the commodity, and has replaced the personal relation which once existed between the employer and the

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employee with an equitable régime of collective bargaining, unionism has been an untold blessing to the toiling millions — a blessing alike to skilled and unskilled labor. There is, however, another side to the shield. Unionism came into being to emphasize the dignity of the laborer as a man — it resulted from a highly organized industrial system, in which the individual played an insignificant part. Then unionism, in turn, became highly organized, so that to-day its chief danger is not to the employer, but to the employee, and lies in the direction of the evil which it was established to overcome. The object of unionism is to assert the dignity of the individual worker as a man; and while, by the very act of combination, the laborer surrenders his will to that of the majority, he does it for the sake of demanding from the factory system a recognition of his personality; that besides being one little wheel in the vast industrial machine, he may be a man as well.

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Important as the benefits of unionism have been, we are, nevertheless, apt to over-emphasize them and to forget that the movement is but one phase of the progress which the mass of mankind is still making towards the full consciousness of freedom. The value of unionism is in the loyalty of its members, not to an organization merely, but to the inclusive cause of labor. "Loyalty," says Josiah Royce, "is the Will to Believe in something eternal, and to express that belief in the practical life of a human being." Now, the cause of labor, uniting in itself the lives of all the workers, is an eternal cause ; its object is to advance the consciousness of human freedom among the masses ; and unionism is but one means by which loyalty to this cause may be expressed. The moment, therefore, that unionism demands of its members a special loyalty to an organization which exists only as a means of furthering an eternal cause, this narrow loyalty becomes a menace

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to every worker whose name is not enrolled upon the union lists; when it entails a disregard for duties which each man owes to every other fellow man, unionism ceases to advance the cause of labor, and becomes instead a hindrance.

That unionism is often unmindful of the inclusive cause of labor is illustrated by the policy of a minimum wage. The intent of this policy is, of course, favorable to the cause of labor, in that it aims to raise the standard of wages; but in the present stage of our industrial development the policy fails to accomplish this result; for a minimum wage is usually determined by the average ability of all the workers in any shop adopting the plan, and the employer, forced to pay the uniform rate to workers incapable of earning it, finds it necessary, in order that his cost of production shall not exceed that of his competitors, to withhold from many superior workmen a rate of wages higher than the minimum, which otherwise they

might receive. Thus the minimum wage tends to become a common wage, the unearned increase granted the incapable workers being paid from the earnings of their more efficient shopmates. The policy, therefore, is sharply antagonistic to the development of efficiency in the individual worker; it stunts his growth as a man by setting a limit to his ambition; it assumes equal efficiency among all the members of any craft, and by placing equal value upon an hour's labor without regard to the quality of it, destroys the reward of ambition.

A fact too frequently neglected in considering the relation of trade-unionism to the individual worker is that there are distinct classes even among wage-workers. First, we have the vast army of unskilled labor, constantly recruited from the swarm of immigrants who daily pass the inspectors at Ellis Island: wanderers from the old world who have never learned a trade come to take their places in our industrial order

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as common laborers. As we review the army, our first thought is one of fear for the permanence of a state which so freely harbors this uncouth and unschooled throng, and we sympathize for the moment with those labor leaders who look askance at the newcomers, seeing in their presence here a degrading influence upon American labor. But if we look more searchingly into the faces of this eager throng passing with high hopes through the gateway of the new world, our fears will be dispelled, for immigration calls for courage and every other personal quality which makes for social progress; they have left their old homes in quest of a more favorable environment for individual growth; in America they find that environment, and thousands of them make the most of it.

The immigrant, on his arrival in America without a trade, in most cases without a knowledge of the language even, frequently the victim of unscrupulous men who seek

to exploit his labor, begins work at a disadvantage and at a wage approximating the meagre income to which he was accustomed in the old world. Many employers will say that to pay him higher wages is to make him indolent, and there is a foundation for the statement. At home his whole life has been a battle for mere existence, there was no margin of wages to be saved, and quite naturally, when in the new world he earns a wage sufficient to provide food, clothes, and shelter, and have a penny beside, he does not save this penny but spends it to buy immunity from toil. After a time, however, he becomes acquainted with men and women of his own race who are no longer strangers in the new world ; he visits them in their homes, and finds that the floors are carpeted, that the children go to school and wear clean frocks, that the table is served with meat and fresh vegetables ; then he begins to note a difference between life in the old world and the new, and he desires

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the luxuries his friends enjoy. He begins to look beyond to-day, and becomes ambitious for the future. Soon his children go well dressed to school and return to a well-kept home; the immigrant has entered the second class of labor, the characteristic of which is thrift.

There is a higher class of labor, and one of vast importance in the evolution by which the worker of to-day becomes the employer of to-morrow: it consists of those who are not only ambitious for their own success and the success of their children, but who look beyond the pay-envelope even, and find happiness in work well done. A machinist recently died in the City of the Dinner-Pail who for nearly half a century had been in the employ of one corporation; year after year he worked at the same lathe until its very ways of hardened steel were worn beyond further service, and in all that time his interest in the affairs of the shop could have been no greater had he, him-

self, been sole proprietor. Sometimes he bought tools with his own money to facilitate his work, and he refused to charge many an hour of overtime because the labor had not been exacted of him ; he looked upon his trade as a fine art and took the same joy in a perfected mechanism that the painter takes in his finished picture. While this machinist was, no doubt, an exception, there are many who work with the same joy of service ; and when, in addition to their love of labor and knowledge of their trade, they have executive ability as well, these men leave behind them the bench and lathe and become themselves employers of labor.

Because the workers are divided into these and many more classes, the task attempted by unionism to create an average craftsman and then set its machinery at work in his interest is not only a difficult matter to accomplish, but is in result hostile to the development of the individual.

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It may be quite true, as the Socialist contends, that we should take even greater care to improve the social organism, of which we are a part, than to perfect our own individual growth; and that the perfect development of each individual is not the highest development of his own personality, but learning to fill, in the best possible way, his own little place in the social world. This is the old question of the one and the many which has given philosophers in every field of thought no end of trouble, for the reason that neither ideal is alone sufficient. Like the citizens of a state, the union workers are united by a common interest into an organized community; but just as, in the state, each individual relinquishes only the right to do those things which hamper his own physical and moral growth,—and thus the physical and moral growth of the community,—and relinquishes nothing which makes for a higher individual and conse-

quently a higher social attainment, so the worker, by his act of association with his fellows, does not sacrifice his right to a well-rounded individual development.

Not long ago the King of England touched with his sword the shoulder of a working mason, who knelt before him, and said, "Arise, Sir William Crossman." A man was raised to the honor of knighthood in a country where little more than a generation ago his espousal of the labor cause would have brought him before the law courts on the charge of conspiracy. Surely unionism has served with power the progress of human freedom. It is possible that the movement may still serve, and with increasing power, the progress of mankind, but to-day there may be observed elements of danger to this free service. The average citizen has an interest in this matter, and should study the facts with care. The value of unionism has ever consisted in the emphasis it has placed

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on the dignity of the individual; to preserve its usefulness in advancing the welfare of the workman, unionism must hold fast to this purpose.

There was once a time when the glory of a state was told in the chronicles of its wars; the soldier was then the hero and physical prowess the measure of his greatness; the soldier indeed was king and the king the state. True, there were craftsmen in those days, but few in number compared with the soldiers; and there were husbandmen, who tilled the soil that the women and priests might not starve, and that a great feast should be spread when the lord of the castle rode back victorious from the wars. But with the rise of democracy the position of the craftsman and the husbandman, the workers of the world, was vastly changed; the worker became the important person, while the soldier was tolerated only to protect him in his industry. And the history of the

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state since the dawn of the new doctrine has been dominated by the progress of the workingman.

Slowly throughout the centuries the consciousness of freedom had been developing in the minds of men. Magna Charta, while containing many benefits for the people, was in no sense a declaration of freedom; the Barons planted the seed merely, seed which for five hundred years slowly matured, until the industrial revolution, which occurred but a century ago, made possible the ripening of the fruit in our own generation. With the industrial revolution came the factory, and about the factory the city sprang up, populated by a people whose interests were identical. Great cities already existed, but they were peopled by men and women occupied with divers activities; in the factory towns a single occupation gave a livelihood to thousands, leading these thousands to unite their efforts for the advancement of their

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condition, which in the end made for the progress of human freedom throughout the world.

The advent of the factory in England, however, created, at first, a reign of great misery among the workers. Not even the galley slaves in the ancient world suffered in mind and body the tortures which were the daily life of the early factory operatives. In Manchester, when the ten-hour law was first agitated, one half the population sought public charity in bringing their children into the world, and of these children less than one half lived until their fifth year. The survivors at the age of seven began to work in the factories, thousands of them slaving under cruel taskmasters who used the lash without mercy throughout the fourteen hours of daily toil; the factory became the plague-spot of immorality, concerning which we have many a painful contemporary record: "Fathers have sworn to it," says *The*

Chronicle, "and wished they had been childless." As we walk the streets of the City of the Dinner-Pail and mingle with the self-respecting throng of quiet-mannered, neatly dressed mill-girls, or enter its factories where no child under fourteen years of age may be allowed to work; as we visit the homes of the operatives and note in how great a measure happiness or misery depends upon individual thrift, we marvel at the progress wrought by the last century in the social condition of the workingmen.

Just as the women spun cotton, wool, and flax, upon the farms where now stand the great factories of the City of the Dinner-Pail, so for centuries before the inventions of Arkwright, the British craftsmen made the textile fabrics of a nation upon spinning-wheels and hand-looms in their own homes. When the factories were built, this vast company of workers was thrown upon the world without gainful

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employment. Some were taught to operate the machinery within the factory walls, but thousands were unable to learn a new trade, and the condition of these was so deplorable that years afterward, when the conscience of the nation would no longer permit half-naked women and children to do the work of beasts of burden in the dark caverns of the coal-mines, these hand-loom weavers hailed the event with joy and gladly offered themselves for this brutalizing employment. It is small wonder, then, that the labor movement began with violence, and that the craftsmen, dispossessed of their means of livelihood, avenged themselves by breaking machinery and burning factories.

The factory hand produced a hundred-fold more yarn and cloth than the craftsman, and the cry of over-production was heard throughout the manufacturing world; wages fell until a day of toil bought but another day of greater misery,

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and starvation seemed to be the gift which machinery had brought to the worker. Thus the cause of the dispossessed craftsmen and that of the operatives who took their places became one—the cause of labor, the right of men by virtue of their human birth to something higher than the lives of beasts, to the creation of a social environment, by legislation if need be, in which the individual might develop his own personality. Then, because it was a crime for workingmen to meet and discuss the evils they endured, unionism was born in secret chambers, from which went forth the agitators who became the pioneers of industrial freedom. What these men accomplished for human progress is recorded in the history of the reform parliaments of the last century; it is recorded, too, in the political history of every civilized nation. In the great movement for the political enfranchisement of the masses, which was the most conspicuous social

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phenomenon of the last century, organized labor played no insignificant part; and the fundamental ideal which animated this movement was the dignity of the individual and the right of every man to the fullest possible scope for the development of his own personality.

Those who mark the evolution underlying our present civilization are coming to believe with Mr. Benjamin Kidd, who long ago advanced the theory, that the people, having been admitted to equal political rights, are next to be admitted to equal social opportunity. It may be that in this next and greater stage of the progress of the masses, trade-unionism is to play no part; that the narrowness of its organization, working in the interest of a select class of workers, may prevent the movement from further advancing the cause of labor. There is much in the present attitude of the organization to give ground for this belief, but those who

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appreciate the service of unionism in the past still hope that its usefulness is not outworn. The function of unionism has ever been to emphasize the human element which is attached to labor as a commodity, to assist in creating an environment in which the individual toiler may have free scope for the development of his own personality. In the coming social evolution some factor must contribute this function; shall that factor be organized labor? If the cause of unionism is made identical with the cause of labor, and thus ministers to the social progress of every workingman, we may believe that trade-unionism still has a work to accomplish; but if the movement is to minister to a class of workingmen only, its usefulness is already at an end. For the cause of labor is an eternal cause, in which the lives of all the wage-workers are united; and its object is to advance the consciousness of human freedom throughout the world.

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Such a cause, from its very nature, must guarantee to every workingman that full measure of individual growth which is the priceless gift of freedom. And this right to a well-rounded personal development is no part of a narrow individualism; it does not mean that the individual shall cease to make sacrifices for the welfare of his fellow men, but, rather, that the worker, advancing to a richer personal life, shall come to the knowledge that man as man is free, and to a full consciousness of that freedom which is perfect service.



VI

THE CITY OF LUXURY

THE CITY OF LUXURY

AFTER a winter spent in the City of the Dinner-Pail, in the midst of its busy life and in touch with that vast army of toilers which daily marches to the sound of the factory bells, I found myself, when summer came, comfortably settled on a sea-girt farm near Newport. At first it was difficult to realize that the scenes about me and the scenes in the life of the toiler, to which I was so accustomed, were parts of the same drama. Yet the scenes so different are intimately connected, and there is more than passing significance in the fact that Fall River and Newport are separated by only twenty miles of railway track.

At Newport no factory bell awakes the sleeper in the early morning hours; the hum of industry does not reach the ear at noon-

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day—here is no camping ground for the Army of the Dinner-Pail. No, this quaint old city by the sea has nothing to suggest of wealth in the making—it speaks rather of wealth accumulated, and by its splendid pageantry dazzles the imagination with visions of America's material prosperity. Here is more magnificence than you may find in the courts of kings—the lavish display of princes in a democracy where all men are created equal.

My first impression of Newport, however, had nothing to do with its lavish pageantry—it related rather to the toil of fisher-folk and farm-hands, and thus in the end became the means of unifying in my mind the problems suggested by the two cities. The farm was situated on the point which reaches out toward Brenton's Reef, on which, some weeks before, a fishing steamer had been wrecked. For several days I studied the stranded vessel, wondering how long it might be before the sea

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would break it up, and if the ship were copper-fastened, and if so, how many barrels of driftwood I might find along the beach to burn in my study fire when the winter evenings came. But others had looked upon the wreck who had no thought of driftwood fires and colored flames, but who saw anchored there upon the rocks a whole season's fuel for their homes; and these men set about to do themselves what I had hoped the wind and waves might do for me. There on the reef lay the wrecked vessel, to me a picturesque sight, suggesting wind and weather and the perils of the sea; but to the farmers and the fisher-folk it suggested cords of firewood and a winter day's necessity.

Three companies engaged in reclaiming the wreck: one of Greek fishermen, whose huts stand on the beach near by, one of Portuguese farmers, whose scant acres lie some miles to the north, the other of farmhands employed on one of the nearby

estates. The work, begun in the afternoon when the tide was rising, was carried on until midnight. Men with ropes about their bodies swam to the wreck, and reaching it, hauled great hawsers from the shore; these they made fast forward, aft, and amidships. On shore yokes of oxen and teams of horses strained and tugged at the hawsers, wresting from the sea its lawful booty, and at last hauling the huge dismantled craft upon the nearer rocks.

The ship, being derelict, was anybody's property, so the work was carried on by moonlight, lest others who had not borne the heat and burden of the day should come by night and carry away the prize. The Greeks were more fortunate than the rest, for their part of the wreck included the pilot-house. This they, wading and swimming beyond the surf or tugging from the shore, towed into a little cove between two points of weather-beaten cliffs and landed it upon the beach. In the pilot-house they

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camped for the night; but for the others, they must work while the moonlight lasted and afterwards keep vigil until sunrise. A deal of labor this for a pile of firewood; hard labor indeed for the simplest necessity of life.

Later in the season, within half a mile of the place where the wreck was brought to the shore, I witnessed another scene—a scene of action quite as strenuous but to a different purpose. The polo grounds are situated on the same point where the vessel went ashore. The green field lay bright in the sunshine, while beyond rolled the ocean, blue as the sky above it. About the side-lines great ladies and gentlemen of fashion were gathered to enjoy the game. Some sat in finely upholstered carriages, drawn by magnificent horses, whose golden harness-trappings glittered in the sunshine; others sat in automobiles; while others, clinging to the tradition of an earlier day, were there on horseback. On the piazza

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of the clubhouse finely gowned women and well-groomed men drank tea while they watched swift-footed ponies, bearing their crimson and yellow-clad riders, helter-skelter over the field. As for the game, it was a splendid show; they played well, those husky young fellows, with a skill and courage altogether admirable, giving the lie to the notion that wealth and dissipation necessarily go hand-in-hand.

As I watched the game, admiring the skill of the players and realizing the magnificent surroundings in which they spend their lives,—surroundings permitting infinite leisure for the cultivation of body and mind,—the words quoted by Matthew Arnold, in his beautiful apostrophe to Oxford, came to my mind. “There are our young Barbarians all at play.” Arnold, it will be remembered, referred to the upper, middle, and lower classes of society as Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. The aristocrats, he said, inherited from the

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Barbarian nobles, their early ancestors, that individualism, that passion for doing as one likes, which was so marked a characteristic. From the Barbarians, moreover, came their love of field sports, the care of the body, manly vigor, good looks, and fine complexions. "The chivalry of the Barbarians, with its characteristics of high spirit, choice manners, and distinguished bearing, — what is this," he asks, "but the commencement of the politeness of our aristocratic class?" "There are our young Barbarians all at play." That line of Arnold's coming to my mind, which at the moment was contrasting the scenes I have described, suggested the thought that, despite the familiar words in the Declaration of Independence, and our inherited repugnance to the idea, we have an upper, middle, and lower class in America.

We cannot refer to our aristocracy by the term Barbarians, for its members are not descended from "some victor in a

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Border brawl," their ancestors being of the old-world populace. Yet by whatever name it may be called, our aristocracy of wealth possesses characteristics curiously akin to the descendants of the Goths and Huns.

America has been a surprisingly short time in creating this aristocracy in all its refinement. We need not now be ashamed to entertain the most beribboned prince in our summer palaces at Newport; and yet, but little over fifty years ago, the author of "Lotus-Eating" complained mightily of the lack of refinement in the "Society" of that famous watering-place. "A very little time will reveal its characteristic to be exaggeration. The intensity which is the natural attribute of a new race, and which finds in active business its due direction and achieves there its truest present success, becomes ludicrous in the social sphere, because it has no taste and no sense of propriety." He complained that the aristocracy, being most successful in the

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acquisition of wealth, knew but poorly how to spend it; that Cræsus, having made his money, was bent on throwing it away, so he built his house just like his neighbors' — only a little bigger — and furnished it with Louis Quinze or Louis Quatorze deformities, just like his neighbors, and bought carriages and gave dinners and wore splendid clothes, but owned few books or pictures; he was mastered by his means, and any other man with a large rent-roll was always respectable and awful to him.

“What is high society,” asks the Lotus-Eater, “but the genial intercourse of the highest intelligence with which we converse? It is the festival of Wit and Beauty and Wisdom. . . . Its hall of reunion, whether Holland House, or Charles Lamb's parlor, or Schiller's garret, or the Tuileries, is a palace of pleasure. Wine and flowers and all successes of Art, delicate dresses studded with gems, the graceful motion to passionate and festal music, are its ornaments

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and Arabesque outlines. It is a tournament wherein the force of the hero is refined into the grace of the gentleman—a masque, in which womanly sentiment blends with manly thought. This is the noble idea of society, a harmonious play of the purest powers.” And in Newport he finds but the form of it—the promise that the ideal may some day be realized; but for the time we must be content with the exaggeration, for “Fine Society is a fruit that ripens slowly.”

A generation only has passed since the Lotus-Eater wrote his charming book, and making allowances for an exaggeration of style quite in keeping with the exaggeration of the fashionable folk about whom he wrote, we may say that his dream of what American society should be is, in a measure, a reality. Here in Newport is seen not only the form of a “Fine Society,” but something of the substance. To be sure, much of exaggeration remains, but it is

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hardly fair to call it characteristic; it remains in the excesses of the ultra-fashionable set—the very new aristocracy; but back of this excess, the description of which furnishes many fair readers with so much enjoyment in the Sunday papers, there is a solid foundation of good manners, bred of culture, in which we may find that “harmonious play of the purest powers” the Lotus-Eater longed to see.

This aristocracy, founded on money though it be, early learned that money is but a means, that culture is the end, and it soon came about that a man must be a pretty insignificant sort of a millionaire, who by his benefactions was unable to found a university, or at least have a professorship named for him, even if he himself were unable to write English grammatically—and the children of these millionaires benefited by their father’s aspirations. We may not say by what marvelous means the transformation was effected, but certain it

is, the Newport of to-day is very different from the Newport of a generation ago. Cræsus does not build his house just like his neighbors', only a little bigger, but commands the services of the ablest architects, who have transformed Newport from a city of commonplace cottages to one of rare architectural distinction. If Cræsus lacks the taste to furnish his house becomingly, he has the sense to hire a decorator to do it for him — although in a larger measure than we realize, this is unnecessary; for Cræsus has, in these later days, abandoned fast horses and flashy waistcoats, and has learned to buy pictures and books for himself — and he enjoys them, too, which is even a greater matter. He does not always spend his money wisely — that were asking too much in a single generation; he still makes too great a show of his money, leading humble folk to imagine that there is some magic pleasure in the mere possession of vast wealth. He will overdo

things occasionally — or at least Mrs. Cræsus will; as when once she built a temporary ballroom next to her stately summer home, at a cost — so the newspapers said — of some forty thousand dollars, and tore it down after a single evening's entertainment. Mrs. Cræsus will spend vast sums of money to no rational purpose, and so give the Socialists a deal to talk about, beside creating the impression that her husband's wealth was not inherited; but on the whole she has made tremendous progress since she was a schoolgirl.

Yes, despite all that we like to think to the contrary, we have an upper, middle, and lower class in America, but these classes are quite different from the very distinct strata observable in Europe. If Arnold had been describing American society, it would have been difficult for him to find a nomenclature so readily as he did when he described the English. To a degree the metric system has been adopted in the division of

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Americans into classes—very much depends on the number of ciphers to the left of the decimal point. This is not to say that everywhere in America a man is rated by the amount of his securities—that were an absurd statement so long as the golden dome reflects the sunlight over Beacon Hill; but from the very nature of things in a nation whose history is essentially one of commercial development, any line between class and class must be relative to the success of individuals in competing for the reward of commercial supremacy; and this reward in the first instance is a matter of dollars.

The history of society in America is the story of workingmen rising to be employers of labor, and this rise is accompanied with a constantly changing standard of living; children whose fathers were content with rag-carpets buy, without knowledge of their significance, oriental rugs, and wear diamond shirt-studs. Their daughters go to finishing school and take on a fine surface

polishing, their granddaughters go to college and learn that the color and design of the ancestral rug is what constitutes its distinction, not the great price which their successful forebears paid for it. This is how classes have grown in America, despite our faith in the gospel according to Jefferson; and it is just this process which has made Newport to-day so^e very different from the Newport George William Curtis wrote about.

I recently read a novel written twenty-five years ago, describing the humiliations of a Western girl, whose father was a wealthy ranchman, when introduced to the polite society of New York. At table she never knew which fork to use, and once she picked geranium leaves out of the finger-bowl and pinned them to her gown. In the end, of course, she learned the usages of good society—and married a titled Englishman. The villain was a Western Congressman, who chewed tobacco, and

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shocked but fascinated the ladies of the exclusive set. This antithesis between the social development of the West and the East was a constant quarry for the novelist in the last generation, and even now stories of this kind are to be found on the bookstands. The moral usually is that real virtue is not a matter of manners — and all good Americans are pretty much alike under the skin. Such stories illustrate the fact that social classes in America are more elastic than in the old world, the one merging imperceptibly into the other as individuals rise in successful competition. In England a junk-dealer's clerk is certain to remain a clerk until the end of his days; or if, by force of ability, he should become a junk-dealer, he will not change his social position by a hair's breadth. In America, if he has persistency, he is more than likely to be the proprietor of a business; and if his success be great enough, you may see him occupying a box at the Newport horse-

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show, or hear of his wife's brilliant entertainments at her villa. You may not read that Mrs. Blank was among the guests, — it was her grandfather who dealt in scrap-iron, and naturally she is a bit exclusive, — but our junk-dealer has established himself as the ancestor of some future exclusive Mrs. Blank.

There is a danger in generalization, and we must not infer that there is no part of our American society claiming refinement as its heritage, that refinement which is inseparable from true nobility and finds its best expression in simplicity of life and character. Such society we may find enthroned in the finest of the palaces which front the sea at Newport; we will find it, too, in some humble home yonder in the City of the Dinner-Pail. Wealth offers no barrier to this society any more than poverty is its open sesame. To the happy mortals who dwell therein, money is but the means to make the world a happier

place in which mankind shall live. This man owns a great house which overlooks the sea, beautiful pictures hang upon its walls, and in the library are fine books and precious manuscripts. It has been his pleasure to collect these masterpieces of literature and art ; he shares the joy of them with his friends, he invites the student and the connoisseur to enjoy his treasures with him ; he lends his pictures to the public galleries and holds his manuscripts in trust for scholars ; and so his pleasure has added to the public wealth as surely as the railroads his industry has built or the mines he has opened. And after the long day's work in one of the countless factories which the genius of this multi-millionaire has created, many men and women return to their quiet homes, there to enjoy the same pictures and books which enrich his mansion — for in this marvelous age, machinery, so despised by some, has given to the humblest citizen every means of culture.

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One day during my summer on the seagirt farm, society was stirred by the arrival of a duchess who came for a visit to a great house on the avenue. The next afternoon many carriages stopped at the door, the footmen leaving cards; society paid its call of welcome. Driving my quiet rig by the house, the sound of the horse's feet upon the pavement attracted attention within. The great doors swung open; two flunkeys, dressed in crimson satin livery, white silk stockings, golden knee-buckles, and powdered wigs, stood before me; one extended a golden salver to receive my cards, but, seeing his mistake, retired. Before the doors closed behind him, I glanced into the great hall, down which a line of other flunkeys in similar livery stood at attention. Somehow that livery has remained in my memory ever since. Surely, in the fifty years since Mrs. Potiphar consulted the Reverend Mr. Cream Cheese concerning the color and cut of the Potiphar livery, Americans

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have made tremendous strides in dressing their servants. It is not, however, the questionable right of Americans to the apostolic succession of flunkeydom that keeps the vision of those radiant servants in my memory, but the suggestion of luxury their decorous forms called up to a mind filled, that afternoon, with the problems of poverty, and with speculations concerning the possibilities of a distribution of wealth in which a living wage might be guaranteed to every able-bodied man who is willing to work for it.

Poverty and Luxury — these are the diseases of our industrial régime, to the cure of which the Socialists offer their ineffectual remedy; ineffectual since the population of the United States is made up of ninety million individuals, some of whom will be forever on the verge of bankruptcy, however great their income, and some frugal and always carrying their account on the right side of the balance

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sheet, however small their annual allotment of wealth.

Poverty and Luxury — twin diseases sapping the life of society: the one destroying ambition by withholding sufficient nourishment to the body; the other rendering men worthless by a superabundance of the good things of life. Poverty is a disease not indigenous to our American soil; it is a plague brought in by immigrant ships from worn-out Europe, and the patients are cured here by the thousands. So long as there remains an uncultivated acre of land anywhere in the Union, there is no real cause of poverty, nor any excuse for luxury while a foot of land is undeveloped.

“The extreme of luxury,” De Lavelaye says, “is that which destroys the product of many days’ labor without bringing any rational satisfaction to the owner.” Another author calls luxury “that which creates imaginary needs, exaggerates real wants,

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diverts them from their true end, establishes a habit of prodigality in society, and offers through the senses a satisfaction of self-love which puffs up, but does not nourish the heart, and which presents to others the picture of a happiness to which they can never attain."

Take either definition you will, we behold in the social life at Newport a measure of luxury men have not witnessed since the fall of Rome.

There was a time when economists apologized for luxury on the ground that those who supported it kept money in circulation, thus benefiting the poor; but that was when scholars believed that money was wealth in itself, and fondly believed that one might eat his cake and have it too. "Money changes hands," they said, "and in this circulation the life of business and commerce consists. When money is spent, it is all one to the public who spends it." We have passed beyond such specious ar-

guments, but there are those even now who think if a man builds a temporary ballroom and destroys it the next day, some one has been benefited. The workers engaged in building and demolishing it and the men who employed them have, no doubt, obtained an immediate benefit; yet the same money might have built ten houses to be the homes of generations of men. Mrs. Cræsus has had her vanishing palace, but ten families are sleeping without shelter because of it. She should beg her husband to use his influence at Washington to restrict immigration, or else to employ his wealth in such a way that these newcomers may be allowed to earn a proper living.

The sentiments which give rise to luxury, we are told, are vanity, sensuality, and the instinct of adornment; but the greatest of these is vanity, the desire to distinguish one's self and to appear of more importance than others. It is this aspect of luxury that flaunts itself on the avenue during

the season. "My owner is rich, rich, rich," toots the horn of yonder marvelously upholstered motor-car, as it speeds along regardless of the pedestrian exercising his inalienable right to cross the street. "My husband is a multi-millionaire," this splendidly gowned matron declares, trailing her marvelously wrought skirt in the mud as she steps from her carriage, while her footman, in a livery more splendid than that of any prince in Europe, stares vacantly into space and touches his shining hat. Yes, these people are distinguished, but it would take an exceptionally sharp eye to tell which in this hierarchy of ostentation is of the most importance.

Condemnation of luxury, however, is not condemnation of wealth. Luxury is a disease merely, which may attack the successful individual just as poverty may sink the unsuccessful one to lower and lower depths of despair; and is no more a necessary result of a large income than poverty

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is of a small one. The question, after all, is not, how great is this man's fortune, but what does he do with it? We can make no quarrel with the Captain of Industry because he possesses so many dollars that neither he nor a dozen clerks could count them in a twelvemonth, if he has earned those dollars by his skill in trade and is conscious of his stewardship. He entered the race on even terms with many thousand others, and outstripped them; by the very bent of his genius he is incapable of becoming a prey to luxury, and uses his wealth to develop new railroads and open new mines, and thus feeds with a bountiful hand thousands of half-starved immigrants from the old world. Such a man is a benefactor of mankind, as truly as the greatest philanthropist. He is engaged in a real service to the nation, and his great fortune is the witness of his service. It has become the fashion of late to belittle these men of great genius and to forget the bene-

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fits which they have bestowed; but this fashion will soon pass and men will again restore to them the praise which is their due.

When, in the economic history of man, the world passed from the agricultural, through the handicraft, to the industrial stage, the multi-millionaire became inevitable; when the first factory was built, the "trust" was its certain result. The trust and the multi-millionaire are essential factors in our industrial evolution, stepping-stones to a new and better order. Very well, you say, we will accept the multi-millionaire at his real value; he is indeed a necessary factor in the development of our industrial world, and we will not only cease to pursue him with venomous prejudice, but we will weigh carefully the findings of investigating committees and allow the rich every privilege guaranteed to the humblest citizen by the Constitution. We will do even more than this: we will admit

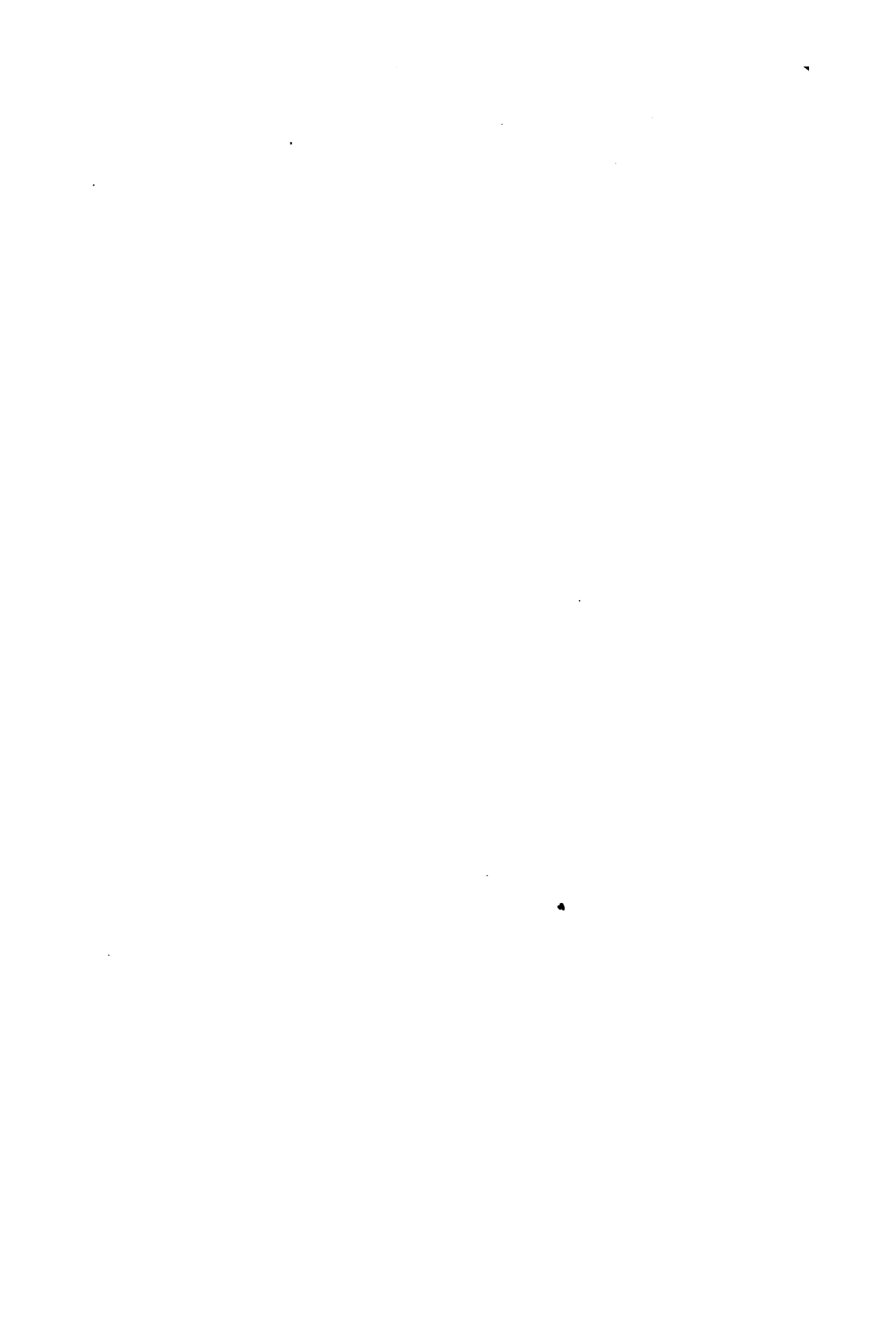
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the right of the multi-millionaire to the fruit of his industry, and allow him to keep unmolested his numerous residences, his horses, his motor-cars and his steam yachts. But what right has his son, who never earned a dollar throughout all his useless days, to inherit this vast wealth? Well, that is a matter for future philosophers and future statesmen to settle among themselves. When the evil becomes sufficiently acute, they will, no doubt, find some remedy, but for the present we have more immediate problems.

We do not know toward what end our American Republic is moving, whether it be toward that industrial state which one enthusiastic young Socialist has prophesied will be a reality within ten years, or whether it be in quite a different direction. But those who mark the course of events see a mighty evolution at work in our national life. On one side we behold the flood of immigration typified by the Greek

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fisher-folk and Portuguese farm-hands, working throughout the long night on Brenton's Point, to win from the sea a scanty pile of firewood; and on the other, the lords of wealth, living in regal splendor in the stately homes overlooking the sea. The amazing natural resources of the new world have brought hither these humble folk to a richer life than their fathers ever dreamed might be, and the same natural resources have made possible this life of splendor — more vast if not more magnificent than the world has known before. What this evolution means, we shall none of us live to understand; for the American nation is still in its infancy, its natural resources are still undeveloped, and its contribution to civilization still lies in the future.







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